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OF THE

ENGLISH POETS.

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BY

ROBERT BELL,

AUTHOR OF

'THE HISTORY OF RUSSIA,' 'LIVES OF THE ENGLISH POETS,' ETC.

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OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

EDITED BY ROBERT BELL

VOLUME VII

LONDON
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POEMS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

[THE *Roman de la Rose* is the earliest poem of its class in French literature. It consists of 22,000 verses; and was commenced by Guillaume de Lorris, who, after proceeding as far as 4070 verses, died in 1260. The allegory was afterwards taken up and completed by Jean de Meun. Moreri, and the biographical collections, assign 1279 or 1280 as the date of Jean de Meun's birth; yet it is certain that in 1284 he translated the *Ars Militaris* of Vegetius. Jehan le Maire, of Belgium, concludes from this circumstance that he must have been contemporaneous with Dante, who was born in 1265. Jean de Meun is supposed to have died about 1318.

There was little in common between the genius of the two authors; and the parts they contributed to the poem are, consequently, distinguished by very different characteristics. Guillaume de Lorris possessed great constructive art, effectively displayed in the conduct of the allegory, remarkable skill in portraiture, rich invention, and exuberant fancy. Jean de Meun, on the other hand, was essentially a satirist; the poetical faculty in him was subordinate to more practical qualities; and his share of the work, deficient in imagination and variety, abounds in wit, sarcasm, and licentiousness. His revolutionary and dissolute doctrines produced a storm. The poem was denounced from the pulpit as a work subversive of religion, order, and social security; and the ladies of the court of Philippe le Bel are said to have conspired to

procure his condemnation to death by blows of sticks, in revenge for his having written profanely of their sex. He was not, however, without vigorous and able defenders, who endeavoured to extract from the allegory moral meanings, which, it may be presumed, the author himself never contemplated, since we find him retracting in his old age, like Chaucer, the poetical offences for which he suffered so much persecution in his youth.[1]

The copyists seem to have been encouraged by these controversies to venture upon the exercise of an unwarrantable discretion over the text, possibly with a view to mitigate its heresies against the popular taste; and the changes they imported into the poem, from time to time, are so minute and extensive that it would, probably, be impossible to find two copies exactly alike, notwithstanding the great number that were made. Clement Marot, who lived in the sixteenth century, carried this rage for alteration to the last extremity, by modernizing the words and orthography, in the same manner as Speght has done with Chaucer, so as to adapt them to the language of his own age. The text, thus deteriorated, was followed in all subsequent editions, until Méon, collating it with a MS. of the date of 1330, and others, restored it in its original integrity.

A beautiful MS. of the *Roman de la Rose* may be seen in the British Museum. It is on vellum, in a large folio volume, illuminated with a profusion of exquisite miniature paintings. The Editor of the first catalogue of the Harl. MSS., 1762, 'supposes it to be the copy that was presented to Henry IV., the blazon of his arms being introduced in the illumination with which the first page is embellished.' But the conjecture is not sustained by the handwriting, which closely resembles that of Vérard, and belongs to the latter part of the fifteenth century. This MS., therefore, although

[1] I'ai fait en ma jouesce maint diz par vanité
Où maintes gens se sont pluseurs fois delités;
Or m'en doint Diex ung faire par vraie charité
Pour amendes les autres, qui pour m'ont probité.

it excels all others in costliness of execution, is not of much authority in a literary point of view.

The principal editions of the *Roman de la Rose* are those by Lenglet du Fresnoy, Lantin de Dammerey, and Méon. The notes and dissertations of Lantin de Dammerey are valuable, and are reproduced by Méon, who adds a glossary much less copious and recondite than that of his predecessor. The only point on which the edition by Méon possesses an advantage, is in the older orthography and greater purity of the text; but the corrections are by no means so numerous or important as is generally supposed. It may be added that the reader would be greatly deceived who should put faith in Méon's assertion, that the edition of Lenglet is full of 'contresens.'

The following outline of the allegory will enable the reader not already acquainted with the subject, to enter at once upon the enjoyment of Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*, which may be considered, as far as it goes, to be a close translation of the original.

The characters and incidents, in accordance with the form common to most of the early poems of this description, are produced in a vision. L'Amant, the lover, dreams that one morning in May he walks out on the banks of a river until he comes to a garden surrounded by a wall, on which he discovers images of Hate, Felony, Villainy, Covetousness, Avarice, Envy, Sorrow, Elde, Pope-Holy, and Poverty. Having contemplated these ominous figures, he knocks at the wicket, and is admitted by Idleness, who informs him that the garden belongs to Deduist, or Mirth, who happens at that moment to be entertaining his friends at a high-festival. Presently Courtesy approaches the stranger, and invites him to join the gay group of carollers by whom Mirth is surrounded. The various allegorical personages who compose the dance are now described. Amongst them the God of Love is conspicuous. He is attended by a bachelor, or knight, called Swete-Loking, who carries two bows, the one straight and beautiful, the other crooked and hideous. To

the beautiful bow are appropriated five arrows, which have the effect of inspiring love in those who are wounded by them; and which are separately named Beauty, Simplicity, Franchise, Company, and Faire-Semblant. The five arrows of the crooked bow are called Pride, Villainy, Shame, Wanhope, and Newe-Thought, and the effect of their wounds is hatred.

After loitering awhile with the noble company, L'Amant proceeds to explore the garden, and in the course of his walk he arrives at the well of Narcissus, which allegorically represents imagination. Here he sees reflected in the water a garden full of exquisite roses. Amongst them he is fascinated by one bud of surpassing beauty, and as he gazes upon it with admiration Love appears, and discharges into his heart the five arrows of the beautiful bow. L'Amant, vanquished at once by this summary proceeding, swears allegiance to Love, who instructs him in his laws, and vanishes.

The rose-tree bearing the favourite bud is surrounded by a thick hedge; and as L'Amant is thinking how he may pass the hedge, and possess himself of the bud, a bachelor called Bel-Accueil comes up, and admits him. The bud is now within his reach; but at this moment a churl, whose significant name is Danger, accompanied by Wicked-Tongue and Shame, intercepts him, and drives him away.

Reason now comes to his assistance, and earnestly advises him to renounce his allegiance to Love; but L'Amant disregards her counsel, and betakes himself to the good offices of L'Ami, by whose aid he succeeds in appeasing the opposition of Danger, who finally permits him to return to the garden. Being free to indulge his delight in gazing on the rose, he approaches and kisses it; upon which Wicked-Tongue and Shame arouse Jealousy, a savage ruffian armed with a ponderous club. Jealousy, fulfilling the instincts of his nature, builds a castle to defend the rose-garden. To this castle there are three gates, kept by Danger, Shame, and Wicked-Tongue; and here Bel-Accueil is imprisoned, an old hag being appointed as guard over him.

Under these circumstances, Reason makes another appeal to L'Amant, urging him to forsake Love, and embrace Friend-

ship. He again rejects her advice, describing friendship as a chimera so little to be relied upon, that all antiquity can furnish only four examples of it. Baffled on this point, Reason next proposes, as the noblest motive of action, universal charity, which she declares to be superior to justice, at the same time illustrating the corruption of judges, by the story of Virginia and Appius Claudius. She further assures him that if he follows her counsel, he will be enabled to despise the gifts of fortune, the delusiveness of which she exhibits in the examples of Nero, Crœsus, and Hecuba. L'Amant, however, is still unconvinced, and Reason takes her leave.

In his extremity he has recourse once more to L'Ami, who informs him that there is a path, known as Trop-Donner, by which he may obtain access to Bel-Accueil, and that he had himself endeavoured to traverse that path, but, having lost all his friends through the desertion of Richesse, he was unable to accomplish his purpose. Enlarging upon this misfortune, L'Ami takes occasion to rail against the institution of property, and to extol the Golden Age, when men enjoyed all things in common, before marriage and possession had introduced Jealousy into the world. The evils consequent upon such a state of society are shown in a dispute between a wife and a jealous husband, the latter of whom utters that ungallant sentiment which is said to have specially provoked the resentment of the ladies at Court :—

> Toutes êtes, serés, ou futes
> Ou de fait ou de volenté, putes.

In the course of his lecture, L'Ami inveighs against those wealthy individuals who possess for their own share riches enough to maintain twenty people; and, ascending to the source of the social injustice, he describes the origin of civil government in a spirit by no means favourable to kings. Having discharged his invective against existing laws and constituted authorities, he returns to the original subject, and after giving L'Amant rules for his conduct as a lover, taken literally from Ovid's *Ars Amandi*, he leaves him to prosecute his adventure.

L'Amant endeavours to carry out the advice he has received

and attempts to reach the prison of Bel-Accueil by the path of Trop-Donner, but is repulsed by Richesse; when Love, taking pity on his distress, descends from heaven to his help.

Collecting his barons for the purpose of assaulting the castle, the god discovers amongst them two strangers, False-Semblant and Constrained-Abstinence, who are at first afraid to present themselves, but are at last admitted as liege-men at the request of the others, the God of Love desiring False-Semblant to narrate his history. From his account of himself, it appears that he generally assumes the habit of a friar, and in the description he gives of the subtle arts by which he thrives, the vices usually ascribed to the Mendicants are delineated with great humour and liveliness.

This episode being concluded, the God leads his barons to the assault. False-Semblant and Constrained-Abstinence proceed to the outer gate, where they encounter Male-Bouche, whom they persuade, by means of a hypocritical sermon, to kneel down and make his confession. While he is on his knees, Constrained-Abstinence seizes him by the throat, and forces him to put out his tongue, which False-Semblant immediately cuts off with a razor forged on the anvil of Coupe-Gorge. Thus securing the gate, they enter the castle, and slay the Norman soldiers, who are all lying drunk.

The duenna who has the custody of Bel-Accueil is now won over by the barons to allow them to communicate with the prisoner. She conveys their message to him, and avails herself of the opportunity to expatiate in a licentious discourse upon the arts of seduction. At length, L'Amant is admitted to an interview with Bel-Accueil, and is ultimately enabled by his assistance to re-enter the garden. Danger, however, attended by Fear and Shame, discovers him in the act of kissing the rose. A struggle ensues, and L'Amant is beaten, and driven out of the castle. The barons gather to the rescue, but are defeated, and Love is obliged to solicit a truce, during which he sends ambassadors to his mother Venus to entreat her aid. They proceed to the Court of Cythera, which they find in mourning for the recent death

of Adonis. Venus hastens to the relief of her son; but she arrives too late. The battle has been renewed, and Love is again discomfited. Irritated by his defeat, Venus swears that chastity shall never more be found in woman, and Love makes a similar vow with respect to men.

During these scenes, Nature has been lamenting the losses daily inflicted on her by death, but is now somewhat comforted by the news of the oath made by Venus and her son. Still, however, desponding, she repairs to Genius, who is represented as a priest, to make her general confession, in the course of which she describes the creation, and denounces the wickedness of men in restraining, by exclusive institutions, the free intercourse of the sexes; and, finally, assuming the character of an instructor rather than that of a penitent, she exhorts her confessor to hasten to the camp of Love, and hurl his excommunications against all who fail in the first command to increase and multiply. Her confession being ended, Genius directs, as her penance, that she shall labour at her anvil with increased diligence in the propagation of the human species; and then sets off for the camp.

Everybody is delighted at the arrival of the Great High Priest, except False-Semblant and Constrained-Abstinence, who suddenly depart without taking leave. Love grants Genius the investiture by the ring and pastoral staff; and, under the sanction of this authority, Genius delivers a sermon, which may be described as a profane parody on Christianity, closing with an exhortation to the barons to increase and perpetuate their species. Animated by this discourse, the soldiers return to the assault, and Venus shoots an arrow through a cleft in the wall, striking down the statue sculptured by Pygmalion which stands within. She then flings a firebrand among the ranks of the enemy; Danger, Fear, and Shame are put to flight; Bel-Accueil is liberated; and L'Amant plucks the Rose. Thus ends the allegory.

Chaucer's translation, consisting of 7699 verses, proceeds only as far as verse 13,105 of the original, where Male-Bouche kneels down to confess. Out of these 13,105 verses

5544 are passed over in the translation; but whether this passage, embodying as it does the violent democratic principles and communist doctrines of Jean de Meun,[1] were omitted by Chaucer, or suppressed, on account of their perilous tendency, by the copyist, must be left to conjecture. The translation is resumed at the narrative of False-Semblant, where he gives an account of the arts by which he imposes upon the people. *The Romaunt of the Rose*, consequently, as rendered by Chaucer, contains the whole of the 4070 verses written by Guillaume de Lorris, which possessed a special charm for the congenial taste of the translator, and 3629 verses of the 17,930 written by Jean de Meun.

All previous editions of this poem have been printed from the corrupt and half-modernized text of Speght, nor was it known until recently that any MS. of the work was in existence. The MS. from which the present text has been taken is probably unique. It forms a large quarto volume on vellum, written in an excellent hand of the earlier half of the fifteenth century, and is deposited in the library of the Hunterian Museum at Glasgow. The text is evidently a good one, and the grammatical forms, with a few peculiarities, are generally well preserved. It has been carefully re-produced in the present edition, the text of which is, therefore, undoubtedly much superior to any that has yet appeared. Unfortunately, in a few places, indicated in the notes, a leaf has been lost, or destroyed, and the deficiency has been necessarily supplied from Speght's edition, the orthography of which, however, has been modified in accordance with that of the MS. Speght, although he made so ill a use of his opportunity, seems to have had access to this MS., or to a copy of it. The same clerical errors, and transpositions of long passages towards the end, by which the sense is destroyed, occur in both.]

---

[1] See p. 196, note 1.

MANY men seyen that in swevenynges,
Ther nys but fables and lesynges;
But men maye some swevene sen,
Which hardely that false ne ben,
But afterward ben apparaunte.
This may I drawe to waraunte,
An auctour that hight Macrobes,[1]
That halt[2] not dremes false ne lees,
But undoth us the avisioun,
That whilom mette kyng Cipioun.
And who so sayth, or weneth it be
A jape, or elles nycete
To wene that dremes after falle,
Let who so list a fool me calle.
For this trowe I, and saye for me,
That dremes signifiaunce be
Of good and harme to many wightes,
That dremen in her sleep a-nightes
Ful many thinges covertly,
That fallen after al openly.[3]
Within my twentie yere of age,
When that love taketh his corage
Of yonge folk, I went soon
To bedde, as I was wont to doon,
And fast I slept; and in slepyng,
Me mette such a swevenyng,
That lyked me wondrous wele;
But in that swevene is never a dele
That it nys afterward befalle,
Right as this dreme wol telle us alle.
Now this dreme wol I ryme aright,
To make your hertes gay and light;

---

[1] See vol. iv. p. 189, note 1.

[2] *Halt* is the contracted form of *holdeth*.—See vol. v. p. 83, note 2.

[3] The question of the significance of dreams is more fully entered into in *The House of Fame*.—See vol. vi. p. 194.

For Love it prayeth, and also
Comaundeth me that it be so.
And if ther any axe me,
Wheither that it be he or she,
How this book which is here
Shal hatte, that I rede you here;
It is the Romaunt of the Rose,
In which alle the art of love[1] I close.
The matere faire is of to make;
God graunte me in gre that she it take
For whom that it bygonnen is!
And that is she that hath, ywys,
So mochel pris; and ther to she[2]
So worthy is biloved to be,
That she wel oughte of pris and right,
Be cleped Rose of every wight.[3]
That it was May me thought tho,
It is fyve yere or more ago;
That it was May, thus dremed me,
In tyme of love and jolite,
That al thing gynneth waxen gay,
For ther is neither busk nor hay
In May, that it nyl shrouded bene,
And it with newe leves wrene.[4]
These wodes eek recoveren grene,
That drie in wynter ben to sene;
And the erth wexith proude withalle,
For swote dewes that on it falle;

---

[1] The poet here adopts the title of Ovid's *Ars Amandi;* but the two poems are composed on entirely different models.

[2] The Glasgow MS. from which the text is taken begins at this line, the first leaf having been unfortunately destroyed. The text of Speght has been followed in the preceding part, but the orthography has been slightly altered to harmonize with that of the MS.

[3] This is not an allusion, on Chaucer's part at least, to any real person, as might at first be supposed, since he follows the French original in his dedication.

[4] *Wrene* is from the Anglo-Saxon *wrean*, to cover. The French is, 'Qui en Mai *parer* ne se voille.'

And the pore estat forgette,
In which that wynter had it sette.
And than bycometh the ground so proude,
That it wole have a newe shroude,
And makith so queynt his robe and faire,
That it had hewes an hundred payre,
Of gras and flouris, ynde and pers,[1]
And many hewes ful dyvers:
That is the robe I mene, iwis,
Through which the ground to preisen is.
The briddes, that haven lefte her song,
While thei han suffrid cold so strong
In wedres gryl and derk to sight,
Ben in May for the sonne bright,
So glade, that they shewe in syngyng,
That in her hertis is such lykyng,
That they mote syngen and be light.
Than doth the nyghtyngale hir myght,
To make noyse, and syngen blythe.
Than is blisful many sithe,
The chelaundre, and the papyngay.[2]
Than young folk entenden ay,
For to ben gay and amorous,
The tyme is than so saverous.
Hard is his hert that loveth nought
In May, whan al this mirth is wrought;
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smale briddes syngen clere

---

1 *Ynde* and *Pers* are adjectives, the former meaning azure, the latter bluish gray. They are probably derived from the countries of India and Persia, whence these dyes were imported. The French is—

'Que de colors i a cent paire
D'erbes, de flors indes et perses.'

2 The papyngay, or popinjay, is among the birds mentioned in almost all Chaucer's descriptions of Spring, and is generally explained to mean the parrot. It is so unlikely, however, that a poet of his extreme accuracy in describing nature should introduce the parrot in pictures of European scenery, that the jay is more probably the bird intended.

Her blesful swete song pitous,
And in this sesoun delytous:
Whan love affraieth[1] al thing.
Me thought a nyght, in my sleping,
Right in my bed ful redily,
That it was by the morowe erly,
And up I roos, and gan me clothe;
Anoon I wisshe myn hondis bothe;
A sylvre nedle forth I droughe,
Out of an aguler queynt ynoughe,
And gan this nedle threde anon,
For out of toun me list to gon,
The song of briddes for to here
That in thise buskes syngen clere,
And in the swete seson that lefe is;[2]
With a threde bastyng my slevis,[3]
Alone I wente in my plaiyng,
The smale foules song harknyng,
They peyned hem ful many a peyre,
To synge on bowes blosmed feyre,
Jolyf and gay, ful of gladnesse,
Toward a ryver gan I me dresse,
That I herd renne faste by;
For fairer plaiyng non saugh I
Than playen me by that ryvere,
For from an hille that stood ther nere,
Cam doun the streme ful stif and bold,
Cleer was the water, and as cold
As any well is, sooth to seyn,
And somedele lasse it was than Seyn,

---

1 *To affraie* here appears to mean *to agitate*. The original is:—
'Que tote riens d'amer s'effroie.'

2 In the MS. this line is evidently corrupt. It reads, 'And in swete seson that svete is.' Speght's reading has therefore been adopted.

3 The sleeves in the middle ages were generally detached from the coat. Thus we often read of alms being given to 'buy a pair of sleeves.' Cryseyde also makes Dyomede wear her sleeve as a pensel, or streamer.—See vol. vi. p. 23, note 3.

But it was straighter, welaway![1]
And never saugh I er that day,
The watir that so wel lyked me;
And wondir glad was I to se
That lusty place, and that ryvere;
And with that watir that ran so clere
My face I wysshe. Tho saugh I welle,
The botme paved everydelle
With gravel, ful of stones shene.
The medewe softe, swote, and grene,
Beet right on the watir syde.
Ful clere was than the morow tyde,
And ful attempre, out of drede.
Tho gan I walke thorough the mede,
Dounward ay in my pleiyng,
The ryver syde costeiyng.
And whan I had a while goon,
I saugh a gardyn right anoon,
Ful long and brood, and everydelle
Enclosed was, and walled welle,
With high walles enbatailled,
Portraied without, and wel entailled
With many riche portraitures;
And bothe the ymages and the peyntures,
Can I biholde bysyly.
And I wole telle you redyly,
Of thilk ymages the semblaunce,
As fer as I have remembraunce.
Amyd saugh I Hate stonde,
That for hir wrathe, yre, and onde,
Semede to ben an moveresse,[2]
An angry wight, a chideresse.

---

1 *Welaway* is generally an interjection expressive of sorrow; here it seems to be introduced merely to fill up the line.

2 The MS. reads *mynoresse*, upon which Speght observes, 'The right reading is *moveresse*, as we have now printed it; that is, a stirrer of debate; for so it is in the French verses in the oldest written copies.

And ful of gyle, and felle corage,
By semblaunt was that ilke ymage.
And she was no thyng wel arraide,
But lyk a wode womman afraied,
Frounced[1] foule was hir visage,
And grennyng for dispitous rage,
Hir nose snorted up for tene.
Ful hidous was she for to sene,
Ful foule and rusty was she this.
Hir heed writhen was, ywis,
Ful grymly with a greet towayle.
An ymage of another entayle,
A lyfte half,[2] was hir by;
Hir name above hir heed saugh I,
And she was called Felony.
Another ymage, that Vilany
Clepid was, saugh I and fonde
Upon the wal on hir right honde.
Vilany was lyk somdelle
That other ymage; and, trustith wel,
She semed a wikked creature.
By countenaunce in portrayture,
She semed be ful despitous,
And eek ful proude and outragious.
Wel coude he peynte I undirtake,
That such ymage coude make.
Ful foule and cherlysshe semed she,
And eek vylayneus for to be,
And litel coude of norture,
To worshipe any creature.
And next was peynted Coveitise,
That eggith folk in many gise,

Sembla byen estre moveresse.' Méon also reads *moverresse*. A minoresse was a nun of the order of St. Clare, who adopted the title from humility. These nuns were commonly called 'poor Clares,' and devoted themselves chiefly to the education of the poor. There would be no propriety in the comparison of Hate to a 'poor Clare.'

[1] That is, wrinkled. The original is, 'Rechignée estoit et froncée.'

[2] That is, 'On the left side.'

To take and yeve right nought ageyne,
And gret tresouris up to leyne.
And that is[1] that for usure
Leneth to many a creature,
The lasse for the more wynnyng,
So coveit is her brennyng.[2]
And that is that[3] penyes fele,
Techith for to robbe and stele
These theves, and these smale harlotes;[4]
And that is routh, for by her throtes,
Ful many oon hangith at the laste.
She makith folk compasse and caste
To taken other folkis thyng,
Thorough robberie, or myscoveiting.
And that is she that makith trechoures.
And she makith false pleadoures,
That with hir termes and hir domes,
Doon maydens, children, and eek gromes,
Her heritage to forgo.
Ful croked were hir hondis two,
For coveitise is evere wode,
To gripen other folkis gode.
Coveityse for hir wynnyng,
Ful leef hath other mennes thing.

[1] Speght reads, 'And that is she that for usure;' but the expression as it stands in the text appears to be in accordance with the idiom of Chaucer's time. The meaning is the same whichever reading is adopted.

[2] In the middle ages usury was considered a sin, the several places in Scripture where it is forbidden being taken in their literal sense.—See Psalm xv. 5. Hence the Jews, who had no scruples in taking interest from Gentiles, monopolised the business of money-lending. Thus, in *The Tale of the Prioresse*, the Jewry is said to be protected by a powerful baron, 'For foul usure and lucre of *felonye*.'—See vol. iii. p. 109.

[3] The MS. reads:—

'And that is that penyes fele
That techeth,' &c.

That at the beginning of the second line is evidently redundant, and is therefore omitted.

[4] *Harlot* was originally applied to men and women alike.—See vol. i. p. 103, note 4. These *smale harlotes* were probably pickpockets.

Another ymage set saugh I
Next Coveitise fast by,
And she was clepid Avarice.
Ful foule in peyntyng was that vice;
Ful sade and caytif was she eek,
And al so grene as ony leek.
So yvel hewed was hir colour,
Hir semed to have lyved in langour.
She was lyk thyng for hungre deed,
That ladde hir lyf oonly by breed
Kneden with eisel strong and egre.
And therto she was lene and megre,
And she was clad ful porely,
Al in an old torn courtpy,
As she were al with doggis torne;
And bothe bihynde and eke biforne
Clouted was she beggarly.[1]
A mantyl henge hir fast by,
Upon a perche,[2] weike and smalle,
A burnet cote henge therwithalle,
Furred with no menyvere,
But with a furre rough of here,[3]
Of lambe skynnes hevy and blake;
It was ful old I undirtake.
For Avarice to clothe hir welle,
Ne hastith hir never a delle;

[1] This description of Avarice appears to be the original of Buckhurst's 'Misery,' which properly means avarice, from *miser*:—

'His face was leane, and somedeale pynde away,
And eke his hands consumed to the bone,
But what his body was I cannot say,
For on his carkas raiment had hee none,
Save clouts and patches pieced one by one,
With staffe in hand, and scrip on shoulder cast,
His chief defence agaynst the winter's blast.'

[2] The *perche* was the horizontal pole, often to be seen in illuminations in manuscripts, upon which clothes were hung to dry.—See *Hist. of Domestic Manners*, by Mr. Wright, in the *Art Journal*.

[3] Burnet was a coarse cloth of a brown colour, probably like that of a cordelier's gown. Gowns were almost always trimmed with fur, as may be seen on brasses of merchants and other civilians.

For certeynly it were hir loth
To weren ofte that ilk cloth;
And if it were forwered, she
Wolde have ful gret necessite
Of clothyng, er she bought hir newe,
Al were it bad of wolle and hewe.
This Avarice hilde in hir hande
A purs, that henge by a bande;
And that she hidde and bonde so strong,
Men must abyde wondir long,
Out of that purs er ther come ought,
For that ne cometh not in hir thought;
It was not certein hir entent,
That fro that purs a peny went.
And by that ymage nygh ynough,
Was peynted Envye, that never lough,
Nor never wel in hir herte farede
But if she outher saugh or herede
Som gret myschaunce, or gret disese.[1]
No thyng may so moch hir plese
As myschef and mysaventure;
Or whan she seeth discomfiture
Upon ony worthy man falle,
Than likith hir wel withalle.
She is ful glade in hir corage,
If she se any grete lynage
Be brought to nought in shynful wise.[2]
And if a man in honour rise,
Or by his witte, or by his prowesse,
Of that hath she gret hevynesse,

[1] This description appears to be imitated from Ovid, *Met.* ii. 795.
'Vixque tenet lachrymas, quia nil lachrymabile cernit.'
—See vol. iv. p. 175, note 2.

[2] This may possibly be intended as a sarcasm on those writers who, like Boccaccio, made the fall of princes the subject of their verse. It appears that it was a favourite theme in the middle ages. Thus the Monke, in his Prologe, says that of such 'tragedis' he has 'an hundred in his celle.'—See vol. iii. p. 184, note 5. Buckhurst's *Mirror of Magistrates* is on the same plan.

For, trustith wel, she goth nygh wode,
Whan any chaunge happith gode.
Envie is of such crueltee,
That feith ne trouth holdith she
To freend ne felawe, bad or good.
Ne she hath kynne noon of hir blood,
That she nys ful her enemye.
She nolde, I dar seyn hardelye,
Hir owne fadir farede welle.
And sore abieth she everydelle
Hir malice, and hir maletalent:
For she is in so gret turment
And hate[1] such, whan folk doth good,
That nygh she meltith for pure wood.[2]
Hir herte kervyth and so brekith
That God the puple wel awrekith.[3]
Envie, iwis, shal nevere lette
Som blame upon the folk to sette.
I trowe that if Envie, iwis,
Knewe the best man that is,
On this side or biyonde the see,
Yit somwhat lakken hym wolde she.
And if he were so hende and wis,
That she ne myght al abate his pris,
Yit wolde she blame his worthynesse,
Or by hir wordis make it lesse.
I saugh Envie in that peyntyng,
Hadde a wondirful lokyng;
For she ne lokide but awrie,
Or overthart, alle baggyngly.

---

[1] The MS. reads *hath*, which is probably a clerical error.

[2] That is, 'She melts for very madness.' For this construction see vol. i. p. 188, note 2.

[3] The meaning is, that God avenges those whom Envy hates, by making her own envious mind the source of her misery. This fine idea is carried out in the mediæval pictures of the last judgment, where those who in this life were under the influence of the malignant passions, are represented as sufficiently punished by being merely suffered to indulge them without restraint.

And she hadde a foule[1] usage;
She myght loke in no visage
Of man or womman forth right pleyn,
But shette hir eien for disdeyn;
So for envie brenned she
Whan she myght any man se
That fairer, or worthier were, or wise,
Or elles stode in folkis pryse.
Sorowe was peynted next Envie
Upon that walle of masonrye.
But wel was seyn in hir colour
That she hadde lyved in langour;
Hir semede to have the jaundyce.
Nought half so pale was Avarice,
Nor no thyng lyke of lenesse;
For sorowe, thought, and gret distresse,
That she hadde suffred day and nyght,
Made hir ful yolwe, and no thyng bright,
Ful fade,[2] pale, and megre also.
Was never wight yit half so wo
As that hir semede for to be,
Nor so fulfilled with ire as she.
I trowe that no wight myght hir plese
Nor do that thyng that myght hir ese,
Nor she ne wolde hir sorowe slake,
Nor comfort noon unto hir take.
So depe was hir wo bigonnen,
And eek hir hert in angre ronnen,
A sorowful thyng wel semed she.
Nor she hadde no thyng slowe be
For to forcrachen al hir face,
And for to rent in manye place
Hir clothis, and for to tere hir swire,
As she that was fulfilled of ire;

---

[1] In the MS. *a foule* is omitted.

[2] Speght reads *sad;* but *fade* is perhaps right, and may mean *faded;* or from the French *fade*, insipid.

And al to-torn lay eek hir here
Aboute hir shuldris, here and there,
As she that hadde it al to-rent
For angre and for maltalent.[1]
And eek I telle you certeynly
How that she wepe ful tendirly.[2]
In world nys wight so hard of herte
That had sene hir sorowes smerte,
That nolde have had of hir pite,
So wo-bygone a thing was she.
She al to-dasht hir silf for wo,
And smot togider her handes two.
To sorowe was she ful ententyf,
That woful recchelesse caityf;
Her rought litel of pleiyng,
Or of clyppyng or kussing;
For who so sorweful is in herte
Hym luste not to pleye ne sterte,
Nor for to daunsen, ne to synge,
Ne may his herte in tempre brynge
To make joy on evene or morowe,
For joy is contraire unto sorowe.
Elde was peynted after this,
That shorter was a fote, ywys,
Than she was wont in her yongehede.
Unnethe hir silf she might fede;
So feble and eke so old was she
That faded was al hir beaute.
Ful salowe was waxen hir colour,
Hir heed for hore[3] was white as flour.
Ywys, great qualme ne were it noon,
Ne synne, although her lyf were gon.

---

[1] Buckhurst's description of Sorrow, in the Induction to the *Mirror of Magistrates*, is evidently imitated from this fine passage.—See *Poems of Surrey and others*. Annot. Ed., p. 269.

[2] Here a leaf of the MS. has been torn out; the deficiency is supplied from Speght.

[3] Her head was white for hoarness.—See vol. i. p. 188, note 2.

Al woxen was hir body unwelde
And drye and dwyned[1] al for elde.
A foule forwelked thing was she
That whilom rounde and soft had be.
Hire heres shoken fast withalle,
As from her heed they wolde falle.
Hir face frounced and forpyned,
And bothe hir hondes lorne for dwined.
So old she was that she ne went
A fote, but it were by potent.[2]
The tyme, that passeth night and day,
And restlesly travayleth ay,
And steleth from us so pryvely,
That to us semeth sikerly
That it in one point dwelleth evere,
And certes it ne resteth nevere,
But goeth so fast, and passeth ay,
That ther nys man that thinke maye
What tyme that now present is:
(Axeth at these clerkes this,
For men thinke it redily
Thre tymès ben passed by)[3]
The tyme, that may not sojourne,[4]
But goth, and may never retourne,
As watyr that doun renneth ay,
But never drope retourne may;
Ther may no thing as tyme endure,
Metalle, nor erthely creature,
For alle thing it frette and shalle:
The tyme eke, that chaungith alle,

---

[1] *Dwiny*, meaning dwarfed or dwindled, a derivative from this word, is still in use in East Anglia.

[2] From this description Buckhurst has also taken his picture of Old Age.—See Induction, *Poems of Surrey and others*, Annot. Ed., p. 276.

[3] This line appears to be corrupt. To ask a question, or *spier at* a person, is the form of expression still used in Scotland and the north of England.

[4] Here the MS. resumes.

And alle doth waxe,[1] and fostred be,
And al thing distroieth he:
The tyme, that eldith our auncessours
And eldith kynges and emperours,
And that us alle shal overcomen
Er that deth us shal have nomen:
The tyme, that hath al in welde
To elden folk, had maad[2] hir Elde
So ynly, that to my witing
She myght helpe hir silf no thing,
But turned ageyn unto childhede;
She had no thing hir silf to lede
Ne witte ne pithe in hir holde
More than a child of two yeer olde.
But natheles I trowe that she
Was faire sumtyme, and fresh to se,
Whan she was in hir rightful age:
But she was past al that passage
And was a doted thing bicomen.
A furred cope on had she nomen;
Wel had she clad hir silf and warme,
For colde myght elles don hir harme.
These olde folk have alwey colde,
Her kynde is sich, whan they ben olde.
Another thing was don there write,[3]
That semede lyk an ipocrite,
And it was clepid Poope-holy.
That ilk is she that pryvely
Ne spareth never a wikked dede,
Whan men of hir taken noon hede,
And maketh hir outward precious,
With pale visage and pitous,
And semeth a semely creature;
But ther nys no mysadventure,

[1] That is, 'Causes everything to grow.'

[2] *Had maad* is the verb agreeing with *the time*, repeated at the beginning of each of the five preceding clauses.

[3] That is, 'Was caused to be written or portrayed there.'

That she ne thenkith in hir corage.
Ful lyk to hir was that ymage,
That makid was lyk hir semblaunce.
She was ful symple of countenaunce,
And she was clothed and eke shod,
As she were for the love of God
Yolden to relygioun,[1]
Sich semede hir devocioun.
A sauter helde she fast in honde,
And bisily she gan to fonde
To make many a feynt praiere,
To God, and to his seyntis dere.
Ne she was gay, fresh, ne jolyf,
But semede to be ful ententyf
To gode werkis, and to faire;
And therto she had on an haire.[2]
Ne certis she was fatt no thing
But semed wery for fasting,
Of colour pale and deed was she.
From hir the gate ay werned be
Of Paradys, that blisful place;
For sich folk maketh lene her grace,
As Crist seith in his Evangile,[3]
To gete prys in toun a while;
And for a litel glorie veigne,
They lesen God and his reigne.[4]
And alderlast of everychon,
Was peynted Povert al aloon,
That not a peny hadde in wolde,
Alle though she hir clothis solde,
And though she shulde anhonged be,
For nakid as a worme was she.
And if the wedir stormy were,
For colde she shulde have deyd there.

---

[1] That is, 'Yielded or devoted to a monastic life.'
[2] From the French *une haire*, a hair-shirt. [3] Matt. vi. 16.
[4] This appears to be the original of Spenser's description of Hypocrisy, in the *Faery Queen*, book i., canto i.

She nadde on but a streit olde sak,
And many a cloute on it ther stak;
This was hir cote, and her mantelle,
No more was there never a delle
To clothe hir with; I undirtake,
Grete leyser had she to quake.
And she was putt, that I of talke,
Fer fro these other, up in an halke;
There lurked and there coured she,
For pover thing where so it be,
Is shamefast, and dispised ay.
Acursed may wel be that day,
That povere man conceyved is;
For, God wote, al to selde, iwys,
Is ony povere man wel fedde,
Or wel araied or cledde,
Or wel biloved, in sich wise,
In honour that he may arise.
Alle these thinges welle avised,
As I have you er this devysed,
With gold and asure over alle,
Depeynted newe upon the walle.[1]
Square was the walle, and high somdelle;
Enclosed, and barred welle,
In stede of hegge, was that gardyne;
Come nevere shepherde therynne.
Into that gardyn, wel wrought,
Who so that me coude have brought,
By laddris or elles by degre,
It would wel have liked me.

[1] See vol. vi. p. 146, note 2. Hatred, Felony, Villainy, or discourteous language, Covetousness, Avarice, Envy, Sorrow, Elde, Pope-holy or hypocrisy, and Poverty, are painted on the outside of the wall which encloses the garden in which blooms the Rose, to symbolize the fact that these things are destructive of Love, and are therefore excluded from his dominions. The same idea is conveyed by the symbolical figures of grinning demons sometimes in indecent attitudes, carved on the gurgoyles and other parts of the outsides of churches, to show that the passions they represent are destructive of Christian faith, and are therefore excluded from the temple.

For sich solace, sich joie, and play,
I trowe that nevere man ne say,
As was in that place delytous.
The gardeyn was not daungerous
To herberwe briddes many oon.
So riche a yeer was never noon
Of briddes songe, and braunches grene.
Therynne were briddes mo I wene,
Than ben in alle the rewme of Fraunce.
Ful blisful was the accordaunce,
Of swete and pitous songe thei made,
For alle this world it owght glade.
And I my silf so mery ferde,
Whan I her blisful songes herde,
That for an hundreth pounde wolde I,
If that the passage opunly
Hadde be unto me free,
That I nolde entren for to se
Thassemble (God kepe it fro care!)
Of briddis, whiche therynne ware,
That songen thorugh her mery throtes,
Daunces of love, and mery notes.
Whan I thus herde foules synge,
I felle fast in a weymentyng,
By which art, or by what engyne,
I myght come into that gardyne;
But way I couthe fynde noon,
Into that gardyne for to goon.
Ne nought wist I if that ther were
Eyther hole or place where,
By which I myght have entre,
Ne ther was noon to teche me,
For I was al aloone iwys,
For wo and angwishis of this.
Til atte last bithought I me,
That by no weye ne myght it be,
That ther nas laddre or wey to passe,
Or hole, into so faire a place.

Tho gan I go a fulle grete pas,
Envyronyng evene in compas,
The closing of the square walle,
Tyl that I fonde a wiket smalle
So shett, that I ne myght in gon,
And other entre was ther noon.
Uppon this dore I gan to smyte
That was fetys, and so lite,
For other weye coude I not seke.
Ful long I shof, and knokkide eke,
And stoode ful long and of herknyng
If that I herde ony wight comyng;
Til that dore of thilk entre
A mayden curteys openyde me.
Hir heer was as yelowe of hewe
As ony basyn scoured newe.
Hir flesh tendre as is a chike,
With bent browis, smothe and slyke;
And by mesure large were
The openyng of hir yen clere.
Her nose of good proporcioun,
Hir yen grey, as is a faucoun,[1]
With swete breth and wel favoured.
Hir face white and wel coloured,
With litel mouth, and rounde to see;
A clove chynne eke hadde she.
Hir nekke was of good fasoun
In lengthe and gretnesse by resoun,
Withoute bleyne, scabbe, or royne.
Fro Jerusalem unto Burgoyne
Ther nys a fairer nekke, iwys,
To fele how smothe and softe it is.
Hir throte al so white of hewe,
As snawe on braunche snawed newe.

[1] It is not very easy to determine the exact colour meant by *grey* in this connexion. The original is *vairs;* and the eyes of a falcon are certainly of that olive-green colour, which, in human eyes, is called black.—See vol. iv. p. 159, note *z*.

Of body ful wel wrought was she;
Men neded not in no cuntre
A fairer body for to seke.
And of fyn orfrays[1] hadde she eke
A chapelet; so semly oon
Ne werede never mayde upon.
And faire above that chapelet
A rose gerland[2] had she sett.
She hadde a gay mirrour,
And with a riche gold tresour
Hir heed was tressed queyntly;[3]
Hir sleves sewid fetously.
And for to kepe hir hondis faire
Of gloves white she had a paire.
And she hadde on a cote of grene
Of cloth of Gaunt;[4] withouten wene,

---

[1] Upon this word Speght has the following note:—'*Aurifrisium*, frisled cloth of gold, made and used in England both before and since the Conquest, worne both by the cleargie and the kings themselves, as may appear out of Matthew Paris, where he speaketh of the ornaments sent by the abbots of England to the Pope, and also by a record in the Tower, where the king commandeth the Templars to deliver such jewels, garments, and ornaments as they had of the king's in keeping. Among the which he nameth *Dalmaticum velatum de orefreis*; that is, a Damask garment garded with orfrayes.' Speght's derivation is very doubtful. *Orfroi* is a French word still in use, and means a broad welt of gold or silver, and the word *orfray* is generally applied to a sort of trimming, as that on the sleeves and skirt of the albe. *Dalmaticum* is not properly translated a *Damask garment*, but the Dalmatic, or vestment peculiar to the deacon in the Eucharistic service. It was *tunica manicata et talaris*, a tunic with sleeves, and reaching to the heels, and the orfray was probably a trimming of gold at the hands and skirt.—See BINGHAM, *Antiq.* vi. 5, sec. 20. Blount says that 'of old the jackets or coat armours of the king's guard were also termed orfrais, because they were covered with goldsmiths' work.'

[2] The custom of wearing garlands of leaves and flowers was very general in the middle ages. Examples may be found in vol. i. pp. 104, 122, and 136. It was evidently derived from classical times.

[3] This may possibly mean that her head was ornamented with gold and silver coins, a fashion still observed in many countries on the continent.

[4] *Gaunt* is the English way of spelling *Ghent*, adopted for the purpose of representing as nearly as possible the French pronunciation.

Wel semyde by hir apparayle
She was not wont to gret travayle.
For whan she kempte was fetisly
And wel arayed and richely,
Thanne had she don al hir journe;[1]
For merye and wel bigoon was she.
She ladde a lusty lyf in May,
She hadde no thought, by nyght ne day
Of no thyng, but if it were oonly
To graythe hir wel and uncouthly.
Whan that this dore hadde opened me
This may, semely for to see,
I thanked hir as I best myght,
And axide hir how that she hight,
And what she was, I axide eke.
And she to me was nought unmeke,
Ne of hir answer daungerous,
But faire answeride, and seide thus:—
'Lo, sir, my name is Ydelnesse;[2]
So clepe men me, more and lesse.
Ful myghty and ful riche am I,
And that of oon thyng, namely,
For I entende to no thyng
But to my joye, and my pleyng,
And for to kembe and tresse me.
Aqueynted am I and pryve
With Myrthe, lord of this gardyne,
That fro the lande of Alexandryne[3]

Ghent and Ypres were the great manufacturing towns of the middle ages. Thus it is said of the 'Wif of Bathe,' that—

'Of cloth-makyng she hadde such an haunt,
She passed hem of Ypris and of Gaunt.'—Vol. i. p. 96.

[1] *Journe* is the French journée, a day's work, as in the expression *un homme de journée*, a day labourer.

[2] *Idlenesse*, in the original *Dame Oyseuse*, is represented as porter to the Garden of Love, because it is generally when the mind is unoccupied with other things that love finds an entrance.

[3] Most of our fruit-trees were originally imported from the East. The damascene, corrupted into damson, is so called because brought from Damascus.

Made the trees hidre be fette,
That in this gardyne ben sette.
And whan the trees were woxen on hight,
This walle, that stant heere in thi sight,
Dide Myrthe enclosen al aboute;
And these ymages al withoute
He dide hem bothe entaile and peynte,
That neithir ben jolyf ne queynte,
But they ben ful of sorowe and woo,
As thou hast seen a while agoo.
'And ofte tyme hym to solace
Sir Myrthe cometh into this place,
And eke with hym cometh his meynee,
That lyven in lust and jolite.
And now is Myrthe therynne, to here
The briddis how they syngen clere,
The mavys and the nyghtyngale,
And other joly briddis smale.
And thus he walketh to solace
Hym and his folk; for swetter place
To pleyn ynne he may not fynde,
Although he sought oon in tyl Ynde.
The alther fairest folk to see
That in this world may founde be
Hath Mirthe with hym in his route,
That folowen hym always aboute.'
When Ydelnesse had tolde al this,
And I hadde herkned wel, ywys,
Thanne seide I to dame Ydelnesse,
'Now al so wisly God me blesse,
Sith Myrthe, that is so faire and fre,
Is in this yerde with his meyne,
Fro thilk assemble, if I may,
Shal no man werne me to-day,
That I this nyght ne mote it see.
For wel wene I there with hym bee
A faire and joly companye
Fulfilled of alle curtesie.'

And forth withoute wordis mo
In at the wiket went I tho,
That Ydelnesse hadde opened me,
Into that gardyne faire to see.
And whan I was inne, iwys,
Myn herte was ful glad of this.
For wel wende I ful sikerly
Have ben in Paradys erthly;
So faire it was, that, trusteth wel,[1]
It semede a place espirituel.
For certys, at my devys,
Ther is no place in Paradys
So good inne for to dwelle or be,
As in that gardyne, thought me.
For there was many a bridde syngyng,
Thoroughout the yerde al thringyng.
In many places were nyghtyngales,
Alpes,[2] fynches, and wodewales,[3]
That in her swete song deliten
In thilke places as they habiten.
Ther myght men see many flokkes
Of turtles and laverokkes.[4]
Chalaundres[5] fele sawe I there,
That very nygh forsongen were.
And thrustles, terins,[6] and mavys,[7]
That songen for to wynne hem prys,

---

[1] This expression occurs frequently; it means, 'Be assured.'

[2] The alpe is the bullfinch.

[3] The *wodewale*, our witwall, Belgian *widewael*, is the oriole, or golden ouzle, a bird of the thrush kind. It occurs frequently in mediæval poetry. Thus, in the ballad of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*:—

'The woodweele sang and wolde not cease,
Sitting upon the spraye,
So lowde he wakened Robin Hood,
In the greenwood where he lay.'

[4] The lark is still called the laverock in Scotland, and the north of England and Ireland.

[5] The chelaundre is, in the glossaries, interpreted the goldfinch: but *chardonneraus*, goldfinches, are enumerated in the original, besides the *calendres*, which were a kind of lark.

[6] The *terin* is the French *tarin*.

[7] The mavis is the song-thrush, which differs from the throstle, or

And eke to sormounte in her songe
That other briddes hem amonge,
By note made faire servyse.[1]
These briddes, that I you devise,
They songe her songe as faire and wele,
As angels don espirituel.[2]
And, trusteth wel, when[3] I hem herd,
Full lustily and wel I ferde;
For never yitt sich melodye
Was herd of man that myght dye.[4]
Sich swete song was hem amonge,
That me thought it no briddis songe,
But it was wondir lyk to be
Song of meremaydens of the see;
That, for her syngyng is so clere,
Though we mermaydens clepe hem here
In English, as in oure usaunce,
Men clepe hem sereyns in Fraunce.[5]
Ententif weren for to synge
These briddis, that nought unkunnyng
Were of her craft, and apprentys,
For of song sotil and wys.
And certis, whan I herde her songe,
And sawe the grene place amonge,

---

thrustle, in being smaller and darker coloured. It is still called the *maywish* in Norfolk.

[1] In the school of poetry which sprung from the 'Courts of Love,' the song of birds was supposed to be their worship of the great sustaining and reproductive principle of Nature.—See vol. iv. p. 179, note 1.

[2] That is, 'As spiritual or heavenly angels do.'

[3] The MS. reads, '*And trusteth wel that.*' *When* has been adopted from Speght, as being necessary to the sense.

[4] That is, 'Of mortal man.'

[5] *Sereyn* means *Siréne*, a siren. They were damsels who inhabited the rocky islands round the promontory of Pelorus, in Sicily, and by the sweetness of their singing enticed mariners within their reach, and then destroyed them. The legend is told in the *Odyssey*, xii. 37.

In herte I wexe so wondir gay,
That I was never erst, er that day,
So jolyf, nor so wel bigoo,
Ne merye in herte, as I was thoo.
And than wist I, and sawe ful welle,
That Ydelnesse me served welle,
That me putte in sich jolite.
Hir freend wel ought I for to be,
Sith she the dore of that gardyne
Hadde opened, and me leted inne.
From hensforth, hou that I wrought
I shal you tellen, as me thought.
First wherof Myrthe served there,
And eke what folk there with hym were,
Without fable I wole descryve.
And of that gardyne eke as blyve
I wole you tellen aftir this.
The faire fasoun alle, ywys,
That wel wrought was for the nones,
I may not telle you alle at ones;
But as I may and can, I shalle
By ordre tellen you it alle.
Ful faire servise and eke ful swete
These briddis maden as they sete.
Layes of love, ful wel sownyng
They songen in their yarkonyng;[1]
Summe high, and summe eke lowe songe
Upon the braunches grene spronge.
The swetnesse of her melodye
Made al myne herte in reverye.
And whan that I hadde herde I trowe
These briddis syngyng on a rowe,
Than myght I not withholde me
That I ne wente inne for to see

[1] For illustrations of the allegorical use of birds in the 'Courts of Love,' which were in full vogue at the period when this poem was written, see Introductions to *The Court of Love* and *The Assembly of Foules*, vol. iv.

Sir Myrthe; for my desiryng
Was hym to seen, over alle thyng,
His countenaunce and his manere:
That sight was to me ful dere.
Tho went I forth on my right honde
Doun by a lytel path I fonde
Of mentes fulle, and fenelle grene;
And fast by, without wene,
Sir Myrthe I fonde; and right anoon
Unto sir Myrthe gan I goon,
There as he was hym to solace.
And with hym in that lusty place,
So faire folk and so fresh had he,
That whan I sawe, I wondred me
Fro whenne siche folk myght come,
So faire they weren alle and some;
For they were lyk, as to my sight,
To angels, that ben fethered bright.
This folk, of which I telle you soo,
Upon a karole[1] wenten thoo.
A lady karolede hem, that hyght
Gladnesse, blisfulle, and the light,
Wel coude she synge and lustyly,
Noon half so wel and semely;
And couthe make in song sich refreynynge,[2]
It sat hir wondir wel to synge.
Hir voice ful clere was and ful swete.
She was nought rude ne unmete,
But couthe ynow of sich doyng
As longeth unto karolyng:
For she was wont in every place
To syngen first, folk to solace,
For syngyng moost she gaf hir to;
No craft had she so leof to do.

---

[1] A *karole*, or carol, was a dance in which all joined hands, sometimes, as here, accompanied with singing, whence the modern acceptation of the word.

[2] The *refrain* is the burden of the song; *to refreyne* would mean, therefore, to sing the burden of the song.

Tho myghtist thou karoles sene,
And folk daunce and mery bene,
And made many a faire tournyng
Upon the grene gras springyng.
There myghtist thou see these flowtours,
Mynstrales, and eke jogelours,
That wel to synge dide her peyne.
Somme songe songes of Loreyne;
For in Loreyn her notes bee
Fulle swetter than in this contre.[1]
There was many a tymbester,
And saillouris,[2] that I dar wel swere
Couthe her craft ful parfitly.
The tymbres up ful sotilly
They caste, and hente fulle ofte
Upon a fynger faire and softe,

---

[1] The palm of skill in song is here given to Loraine, in preference to the more western departments of France.

[2] Upon this word Tyrwhitt has the following note:—'Sailours may mean *dancers*, from the Lat. Fr. [salio, Lat., saillir, Fr.] So in *P. P.* [*Piers Ploughman*] 68. *For I can neither* saylen, *ne saute, ne synge to the gyterne.* The lines which Chaucer has here translated are not in the best edition of the *Rom. de la Rose*, Paris, 1735; but they are adopted by Junius, *Etym. Ling. Angl.* in v. *Timbestere*, from an edition of 1529:—

'Apres y eut farces joyeuses,
Et batelleurs et batelleuses,
Qui de passe passe jouoyent,
Et en l'air ung bassin ruoyent,
Puis le sçavoyent bien recueillir
Sur ung doy, sans point y failler,'

where it is plain that the author is speaking of *jugglers* rather than *dancers*.' Méon's reading is quite different, though the meaning is nearly the same:—

'Assez i ot tableteresses
Ilec entor, et tymberesses
Qui moult savoient bien joer,
Et ne finoient de ruer
Le tymbre en haut, si recuilloient
Sur ung doi, c'onque n'i failloient.'

The *tours de force* here described were, however, part of the public dancer's art in the middle ages. From the preceding quotations it appears that the *tymbester* was a kind of mountebank (bateleur), one of

That they failide never mo.
Ful fetys damyseles two,
Ryght yonge, and fulle of semelyhede,
In kirtles, and noon other wede,
And faire tressed every tresse,
Hadde Myrthe doon, for his noblesse,
Amydde the karole for to daunce;
But herof lieth no remembraunce,
Hou that they daunced queyntly.
That oon wolde come alle pryvyly
Agayn that other; and whan they were
Togidre almost, they threwe yfere
Her mouthis so, that thorough her play
It semed as they kiste alway;
To dauncen welle koude they the gise;
What shulde I more to you devyse?
Ne bode I never thennes go,
Whiles that I sawe hem daunce so.
Upon the karolle wonder faste,
I gan biholde; til atte laste
A lady gan me for to espie,
And she was cleped Curtesie,
The worshipfulle, the debonaire;
I pray to God evere falle hir faire!
Ful curtisly she callede me,
'What do ye there, beau sire?' quod she,
'Come, and if it lyke yow
To daucen, dauncith with us now.'
And I without tariyng
Wente into the karolyng.
I was abasshed neveradelle,
But it to me liked right welle,

---

whose feats was throwing up *tymbres*, or basins, and catching them on one finger. The *tymbre* also served as a kind of musical instrument, probably like our *timbrel*, which is, in fact, a brazen basin. It occurs in the list of musical instruments given by Guillaume de Machault.—See vol. iv. p. 249, note 2; and is interpreted by M. de Rocquefort, *sorte de tamboure*.

That Curtesie me cleped so,
And bad me on the daunce go.
For if I hadde durst, certeyn
I wolde have karoled right fayn,
As man that was to daunce right blithe.
Thanne gan I loken ofte sithe
The shape, the bodies, and the cheres,
The countenaunce and the maneres
Of alle the folk that daunced there,
And I shal telle what they were.
Ful faire was Myrthe, ful longe and high,
A fairer man I nevere sigh.[1]
As rounde as appille was his face,
Ful rody and white in every place.
Fetys he was and wel beseye,
With metely mouth and yen greye;
His nose by mesure wrought ful right;
Crispe was his heer,[2] and eek ful bright.
Hise shuldris of a large brede,
And smalish in the girdilstede.
He semed lyke a portreiture,
So noble he was of his stature,
So faire, so joly, and so fetys,
With lymes wrought at poynt devys,[3]
Delyver, smert, and of grete myght;[4]
Ne sawe thou nevere man so lyght.
Of berde unnethe hadde he no thyng,
For it was in the first spryng.
Ful yonge he was, and mery of thought,
And in samette, with briddis wrought,
And with gold beten ful fetysly,
His body was clad ful richely.

---

[1] *Sigh* is the past tense of the verb *to see*.

[2] Thus the squyer, who is the model of a gallant young gentleman, is represented 'With lokkes crulle as they were layde in presse.'—See vol. i. p. 79.

[3] See vol. vi. p. 222, note 3.

[4] The squyer, in the general prologe, is also described as being 'wondurly delyver, and gret of strengthe.'

Wrought was his robe in straunge gise,
And al to-slytered for queyntise
In many a place, lowe and hie.[1]
And shode he was with grete maistrie,
With shoon decoped,[2] and with laas,
By drury, and by solas.
His leef a rosyn chapelet
Hadde made, and on his heed it set.
And wite ye who was his leef?
Dame Gladnesse there was hym so leef,
That syngith so wel with glad courage,
That from she was twelve yeer of age,
She of hir love graunt hym made.
Sir Mirthe hir by the fynger hadde
Daunsyng, and she hym also;
Grete love was atwixe hem two.
Bothe were they faire and bright of hewe;
She semede lyke a rose newe
Of colour, and hir flesh so tendre,
That with a brere smale and slendre
Men myght it cleve, I dar wel seye.
Hir forheed frounceles al pleye,[3]
Bent were hir browis two,
Hir yen greye, and glad also,
That laugheden ay in hir semblaunt,
First or the mouth, by covenaunt.[4]
I wot not what of hir nose I shal descryve;
So faire hath no womman alyve.

---

[1] This is an allusion to the fashion of slitting or slashing different parts of the dress, that is, cutting it in slits so as to show the undergarment or lining. Thus in pictures we often see the doublet and hose of crimson velvet slashed so as to discover white satin underneath.

[2] *Decoupé* signifies stamped in a pattern. Shoes are often thus represented in pictures.—See vol. i. p. 197, note 2.

[3] *Pleye* appears to be written by poetical licence for *pleyne*, to suit the rhyme.

[4] This is a most exquisite trait. The eyes and mouth of Gladnesse seemed to have made a covenant that the former should laugh before a smile appeared upon the latter.

Hir heer was yelowe, and clere shynyng,
I wot no lady so likyng.
Of orfrayes fresh was hir gerland,
I, which seyen have a thousand,
Saugh never, ywys, no gerlond yitt,
So wel wrought of silk as it.
And in an overgilt samet
Cladde she was, by grete delit,
Of which hir leef a robe werede,
The myrier she in hir herte ferede.
And next hir wente, in hir other side,
The God of Love, that can devyde[1]
Love, and as hym likith it be.
But he can cherles daunten, he,
And maken folkis pride fallen.
And he can wel these lordis thrallen,
And ladyes putt at lowe degre,
Whan he may hem to proude see.
This God of Love of his fasoun
Was lyke no knave, ne quystroun;[2]
His beaute gretly was to preyse.
But of his robe to devise
I drede encombred for to be.
For nought clad in silk was he,
But alle in floures and in flourettes,
Painted alle with amorettes;[3]
And with losynges and scochouns,
With briddes, lybardes, and lyouns,
And other beastis wrought ful welle.
His garnement was everydelle

---

[1] *Divide* here means 'portion out.'

[2] *Quistron* is in Urry's Glossary interpreted a beggar, as if derived from *quester*, quêter, to beg; but Tyrwhitt thinks it means a scullion, or *garçon de cuisine*.

[3] *With* here means *by*. These flowers were painted by amorous young ladies:—

'Ains avoit robe de floretes
Fete par fines amoretes
A losenges,' &c.

Portreied and wrought with floures,
By dyvers medlyng of coloures.
Floures there were of many gise
Sett by compas in assise;
Ther lakkide no flour to my dome,
Ne nought so mych as flour of brome,
Ne violete, ne eke pervynke,
Ne flour noon, that man can on thynke,
And many a rose leef ful longe,
Was entermelled ther amonge:
And also on his heed was sette
Of roses reed a chapelett.
But nyghtyngales a fulle grete route,
That flyen over his heed aboute,
The leeves felden as they flyen,
And he was alle with briddes wryen;
With popynjay, with nyghtyngale,
With chalaundre, and with wodewale,
With fynche, with lark, and with archaungelle.[1]
He semede as he were an aungelle,
That doun were comen fro Hevene clere.
Love hadde with hym a bachelere,
That he made alleweyes with hym be,
Swete-Lokyng cleped was he.
This bacheler stode biholdyng
The daunce, and in his honde holdyng
Turke bowes two, fulle wel devysed had he.
That oon of hem was of a tree
That bereth a fruyt of savour wykke;
Ful crokid was that foule stikke,
And knotty here and there also,
And blak as bery, or ony slo.
That other bowe was of a plant
Without wem, I dar warant,

[1] The *Archaungelle* appears to mean the bird called the titmouse, as *mesange*, which bears this signification, is the word in the original. In Urry's Glossary, *archaungelle* is erroneously interpreted an herb so called.

Ful evene, and by proporcioun
Treitys and long, of ful good fasoun.
And it was peynted wel and twythen,
And over al diapred and writen
With ladyes and with bacheleris,
Fulle lyghtsom and glad of cheris.
These bowes two helde Swete-Lokyng,
That semede lyk no gadelyng.
And ten brode arowis hilde he there,
Of which five in his right hond were.
But they were shaven wel and dight,
Nokked and fethered right;
And alle they were with gold bygoon,
And stronge poynted everychoon,
And sharp for to kerven welle.
But iren was ther noon ne stelle,
For al was golde, men myght it see,
Outake the fetheres and the tree.[1]
The swiftest of these arowis fyve
Out of a bowe for to dryve,
And best fethered for to flee,
And fairest eke, was clepid Beaute.
That other arowe that hurteth lasse,
Was clepid (as I trow) Symplesse.
The thridde clepid was Fraunchise,
That fethered was in noble wise
With valour and with curtesye.
The fourthe was cleped Compaigny,
That hevy for to shoten ys;
But who so shetith right, ywys,
May therwith doon grete harme and wo.
The fifte of these, and laste also,
Faire-Semblaunt men that arowe calle,
The leest grevous of hem alle.
Yit can it make a ful grete wounde,
But he may hope his sorys sounde,

[1] The idea of the two bows is taken from Ovid, *Met.* i. 477.

That hurt is with that arowe, ywys;
His wo the bette bistowed is.
For he may sonner have gladnesse,
Hir langour ought to be the lesse.
Five arowis were of other gise,
That ben ful foule to devyse;
For shaft and ende, soth for to telle,
Were al so blak as fende in helle.
The first of hem is called Pride;
That other arowe next hym biside,
It was cleped Vylanye;
That arowe was as with felonye
Envenymed, and with spitous blame.
The thridde of hem was clepe Shame.
The fourthe, Wanhope cleped is,
The fifte, the Newe-Thought, ywys.
These arowis that I speke of heere,
Were alle fyve on oon maneere,
And alle were they resemblable.
To hem was wel sittyng and able,
The foule croked bowe hidous,
That knotty was, and al roynous.
That bowe semede wel to shete
These arowis fyve, that ben unmete
And contrarye to that other fyve.
But though I telle not as blyve
Of her power, ne of her myght,
Herafter shal I tellen right
The soothe, and eke signyfiaunce,[1]
As fer as I have remembraunce:
Alle shall be seid, I undirtake,
Er of this book an ende I make.[2]

---

[1] This promise William of Lorris did not live to fulfil.

[2] Swete-Loking is represented as holding two bows, the one ugly and crooked, the other beautiful and straight, to denote the different impressions of love or dislike which looking produces. The arrows belonging to the straight bow, productive of love, are Beauty, Simplicity, Frankness, Company, Faire Semblaunt. The

Now come I to my tale ageyne.
But aldirfirst, I wole you seyn
The fasoun and the countenaunces
Of alle the folk that on the daunce is.
The God of Love, jolyf and lyght,
Ladde on his honde a lady bright,
Of high prys, and of grete degre.
This lady called was Beaute,
And an arowe, of which I tolde.[1]
Ful wel thewed was she holde,
Ne she was derk ne broun, but bright,
And clere as the mone-lyght,
Ageyn whom alle the sterres semen
But smale candels, as we demen.
Hir flesh was tendre as dewe of flour,
Hir chere was symple as byrde in bour;
As whyte as lylye or rose in rys,
Hir face gentyl and tretys.
Fetys she was, and smale to se,
No wyntred browis had she,
Ne popped hir, for it neded nought
To wyndre hir, or to peynte hir ought.[2]
Hir tresses yelowe, and longe straughten,
Unto hir helys down they raughten:
Hir nose, hir mouth, and eyhe and cheke
Wel wrought, aud alle the remenaunt eke.
A ful grete savour and a swote,
Me thought in myn herte rote,
As helpe me God, whan I remembre,
Of the fasoun of every membre!
In world is noon so faire a wight;
For yonge she was, and hewed bright

---

arrows belonging to the ugly bow, and which produce dislike, are Pride, Villainy, or base breeding, Shame, Wanhope, or Despair, Newe Thought, or Inconstancy.

[1] That is, 'This lady's name was Beauty, which was also the name of her arrow of which I have told you.'

[2] *Wyndre* is from the French, guignier. The original is:—

'Ne fu fardée ne guignie.'

Sore plesaunt, and fetys withalle,
Gente, and in hir myddelle smalle.
Biside Beaute yede Richesse,
An high lady of gret noblesse,
And gret of prys in every place.
But who so durste to hir trespace,
Or til hir folk, in werk or dede,
He were fulle hardy, out of drede,
For bothe she helpe and hindre may.
And that is nought of yisterday
That riche folk have fulle gret myght
To helpe, and eke to greve a wyght.
The beste and the grettest of valour
Diden Rychesse ful gret honour,
And besy were hir to serve,
For that they wolde hir love deserve.
They cleped hir 'Lady,' grete and smalle;
This wide world hir dredith alle.
This world is alle in hir daungere.[1]
Hir court hath many a losengere,
And many a traytour envyous,
That ben ful besy and curyous
For to dispreisen, and to blame
That best deserven love and name.
Bifore the folk hem to bigilen,
These losengeris hem preyse and smylen,
And thus the world with word anoynten;[2]
But aftirward they prile and poynten,
The folk right to the bare boon,
Bihynde her bak whan they ben goon,
And foule abate the folkis prys.
Ful many a worthy man, ywys,

---

[1] *Daunger* means jurisdiction, authority, hence the allegorical name in the 'Courts of Love' for the husband, as being the person who has legal jurisdiction or authority over the lady.—See vol. iv. p. 114.

[2] That is, 'They flatter the world with their smooth, oily, unctuous manners.'

An hundrid, have they do to dye.
These losengers thorough flaterye,
Have maad folk ful straunge be,
There hem ought be pryve.
Wel yvel mote they thryve and thee,
And yvel achyved mote they be
These losengers ful of envye!
No good man loveth her companye.
Richesse a robe of purpur[1] on hadde,
Ne trowe not that I lye or madde;
For in this world is noone it lyche,
Ne by a thousand deelle so riche,
Ne noon so faire; for it ful welle
With orfrays leyd was everydelle,
And portraied in the ribanynges
Of dukes storyes, and of kynges.
And with a bend of gold tasseled,
And knoppis fyne of gold enameled,[2]

[1] Purple, or, as we call it, scarlet, is the imperial colour, and denotes magnificence. Hence the members of the imperial family in the lower empire were called Porphyrogeniti, or born in the purple, which has since passed into a sort of proverb, meaning born in affluence.

[2] Speght reads *ameled*, which is perhaps right, from the French *email*, enamel. The word in the original is *néélée*, which M. Méon interprets *emaillée*:—

'Si étoit au col bien orlée
D'une bende d'or néélee.'

In a note upon this place Warton observes: 'Enamelling, and perhaps pictures in enamel, were common in the middle ages. From the testament of Joh. de Foxle, knight, dat. apud Bramshill, Co. Southampt. Nov. 5, 1378: Item lego Domino Abbati de Waltham unum annulum auri grossi, cum una saphira infixa, et nominibus trium regum (of Cologne) sculptis in eodem annulo. Item lego Margarite sorori meæ unam tabulam argenti deaurati, et *amelitam*, minorem de duabus quas habeo, cum diversis imaginibus sculptis in eâdem. Item lego Margerie uxori Johannis de Wilton unum monile auri, cum S. littera sculpta et *amelita* in eodem.—*Registr. Wykeham Episc. Winton*, p. ii. fol. 24. See also Dugd. *Bar.* i. 234 a.' *Hist. of Eng. Poet.* sec. xiii.

In the notes added to the last edition of Warton we are informed that 'this art flourished most at Limoges, in France. So early as the year 1197 we have 'Duas tabulas æneas superauratas de *labore Limogiæ*.'—*Chart. ann.* 1197 apud Ughelin. tom. vii., *Ital. Sacr.* p. 1274. It is called *Opus Lemnoviticum* in Dugdale's *Mon.* iii. 310, 313, 331. And in Wilkins's *Concil.* i. 666, where two cabinets for the Host are

Aboute hir nekke of gentyl entayle
Was shete the riche chevesaile,[1]
In which ther was fulle gret plente
Of stones clere and bright to see.
Rychesse a girdelle hadde upon,
The bokele of it was of stoon,
Of vertu gret, and mochel of myght;[2]
For who so bare the stoon so bright,

---

ordered, one of silver or of ivory, and the other *de opere Lemovicino*.—Synod. Wigorn. A.D. 1240; and in many other places. I find it called *Limaise* in a metrical romance, the name of which I have forgot, where a tomb is described—

'And yt was, the Romans saye,
All with golde and *limaise*.'

Carpentier (v. Limogia) observes that it was anciently a common ornament of sumptuous tombs. He cites a testament of the year 1327, 'Je lais huit cens livres pour faire deux tombes hautes et levées de l'œuvre de Limoges.' The original tomb of Walter de Merton, Bishop of Rochester, erected in his cathedral about the year 1276, was made at Limoges. This appears from the accompts of his executors, viz., 'Et computant xll. vs. vid. liberat. magistro Johanni Linnomcensi, pro tumba dicti Episcopi Roffensis, *scil.*, pro constructione et carriagio de Lymoges ad Roffam. Et xls. viiid. cuidam executori apud Lymoges ad ordinandum et providendum constructionem dictæ tumbæ. Et xs. viiid. cuidam garcioni eunti apud Lymoges quærenti dictam tumbam constructam, et ducenti eam cum dicto Mag. Johanne usque Roffam. Et xxiil. in materialibus circa dictam tumbam defricandam. Et vii. marcas in ferramento ejusdem, et carriagio a Londino usque ad Roffam, et aliis parandis ad dictam tumbam. Et xis. cuidam vitriario pro vitris fenestrarum emptarum juxta tumbam dicti Episcopi apud Roffam.'—ANT. WOOD'S *MS. Merton Papers*, Bibl. Bodl. Cod. Ballard. 46.

[1] *Chevesaile* means a collar. It does not occur in the original, which has—

'Si i avoit tretout a taille
De riches pierres grant plenté.'

But it is found afterwards with this meaning—

'Et ce ne li séoit pas mal
Que sa cheveçaille iert overte.'

Of gentyl entayle means of beautiful cutting (intaglio), or beautifully cut.

[2] See vol. v. p. 67, note 1. To the instances there given of this curious belief, it may be added that there is a very early treatise in Saxon (MSS. Cotton. Tib. A. 3 liii. fol. 98) on the twelve precious stones mentioned in Rev. xxi. Marbode, Bishop of Rennes, who died in the year 1123, has left a book on the virtues of gems, which was

Of venym durst hym no thing doute,
While he the stoon hadde hym aboute.
That stoon was gretly for to love,
And tyl a riche man byhove
Worth alle the gold in Rome and Frise.[1]
The mourdaunt, wrought in noble wise,
Was of a stoon fulle precious,
That was so fyne and vertuous,
That hole a man it koude make
Of palasie, and tothe ake.
And yit the stoon hadde such a grace,
That he was siker in every place
Alle thilke day not blynde to bene,
That fastyng myght that stoon seene.
The barres were of gold ful fyne,
Upon a tyssu of satyne,
Fulle hevy, gret, and no thyng lyght,
In everiche was a besaunt[2] wight.
Upon the tresses of Richesse
Was sette a cercle for noblesse[3]
Of brend gold, that fulle lyght shoon;
So faire trowe I was never noon.
But she were kunnyng for the nonys,
That koude devyse alle the stonys

---

early translated into French octosyllabic verse, and published in the *Œuvres de Hildebert, Evêque de Mons*, edit. Ant. Beaugendre, Col. 1638. The original was edited with notes by Lampudius Alardus. This Tyrwhitt supposes to be the work quoted in *The House of Fame* by the name of the *Lapidaire*.—See vol. vi. p. 238, note 2. Henry of Huntingdon, who flourished about the year 1145, has also written a book entitled *De gemmis*. The allegorical meanings attributed to precious stones in Scripture probably gave rise to, or at least favoured, the belief in their mystical virtues.

[1] *Frise* is interpreted *Friezeland* by Tyrwhitt; but Friezeland is by no means remarkable for its wealth. Perhaps Phrygia, one of the provinces of Asia Minor, and contiguous to Lydia, the kingdom of Crœsus, may be the country intended.

[2] The bezant was a gold coin of the lower empire, so called because coined at Byzantium. The meaning is that the bars of the buckle had in them the weight of a bezant of gold.

[3] *A cercle of noblesse* means a coronet denoting her nobility.

That in that cercle shewen clere;
It is a wondir thing to here.
For no man koude preyse or gesse
Of hem the valewe or richesse.
Rubyes there were, saphires, jagounces,[1]
And emeraudes, more than two ounces.
But alle byfore ful sotilly
A fyn karboncle sette saugh I.
The stoon so clere was and so bright,
That, al so soone as it was nyght,
Men myght seen to go for nede
A myle or two, in lengthe and brede.
Sich lyght sprang oute of the stone,
That Richesse wondir bright shone,
Bothe hir heed, and alle hir face,
And eke aboute hir al the place.
Dame Richesse on hir honde gan lede
A yong man fulle of semelyhede,
That she best loved of ony thing;
His lust was mich in housholding.
In clothyng was he ful fetys,
And loved to have welle hors of prys.
He wende to have reproved be
Of thefte or moordre, if that he
Hadde in his stable ony hakeney.[2]
And therfore he desired ay
To be aqueynted with Richesse;
For alle his purpos, as I gesse,
Was for to make gret dispense,
Withoute wernyng or diffense.
And Richesse myght it wel sustene,
And hir dispence welle mayntene,

[1] The MS. reads *ragounces*, which Speght interprets precious stones; but there is really no such word. The original is—

'Rubis i ot, saphirs, jagonces.'

The jagonce is the jacinthus, or hyacinthus.

[2] That is, 'He would have considered himself amenable to as much blame for having a hackney in his stable as if he had committed a theft or murder.'

And hym alwey sich plente sende,
Of gold and silver for to dispende
Withoute lakke or daunger,
As it were poured in a garner.[1]
And after on the daunce wente
Largesse, that settith al hir entente
For to be honourable and free;
Of Alexandres kyn was she.[2]
Hir most joye was, ywys,
Whan that she yaf, and seide, 'Have this.'
Not Avarice, the foule caytyf,
Was half to gripe so ententyf,
As Largesse is to yeve and spende.
And God ynough alwey hir sende,
So that the more she yaf awey,
The more, ywys, she hadde alwey.
Gret loos hath Largesse, and gret pris;
For bothe wys folk and unwys
Were hooly to hir baundon[3] brought,
So wel with yiftes hath she wrought.
And if she hadde an enemy,
I trowe that she coude tristely
Make hym fulle soone hir frend to be,
So large of yift, and free was she;
Therfore she stode in love and grace
Of riche and pover in every place.
A fulle gret fool is he, ywys,
That bothe riche and nygart is.
A lord may have no maner vice,
That greeveth more than avarice.
For nygart never with strengthe of honde
May wynne gret lordship or londe.

[1] *Garner* means a *grénier*, or garret, where the merchants held their counting-houses, probably for security. Thus, in the *Schipmannes Tale*, the merchant goes *up* to his counting-house :—

'And up into his countour hous goth he.'

See vol. iii. p. 94.

[2] She was of the race of Alexander, who, among his other great qualities, was remarkable for his liberality.

[3] The original is, 'A son bandon,' to her disposal.

For frendis alle to fewe hath he
To doon his wille perfourmed be.
And who so wole have frendis heere,
He may not holde his tresoure deere.
For by ensample I telle this,
Right as an adamaund, iwys,
Can drawen to hym sotylly
The yren, that is leid therby,
So drawith folkes hertis, ywis,
Silver and gold that yeven is.[1]
Largesse hadde on a robe fresh
Of riche purpur sarlynysh.
Wel fourmed was hir face and cleere,
And opened hadde she hir colere;
For she right there hadde in present
Unto a lady maad present
Of a gold broche, ful wel wrought.
And certys it myssatte hir nought;
For thorough hir smokke wrought with silk,
The flesh was seen as white as mylk.
Largesse, that worthy was and wys,
Hilde by the honde a knyght of prys,
Was sibbe to Artour of Britaigne.[2]
And that was he that bare the ensaigne
Of worship, and the gousfaucoun.[3]
And yit he is of sich renoun,
That men of hym seye faire thynges
Byfore barouns, erles, and kynges.
This knight was comen alle newly
Fro tourneiyng faste by;

[1] The reader will observe that the poem is throughout interspersed with practical reflections on life and manners, which interrupt the allegory, but are in themselves excellent.

[2] This knight is represented as related (*sibbe*) to the celebrated King Arthur, who was the *beau idéal* of chivalry and every knightly accomplishment.

[3] The original is *gonfanon; gousfaucoun* is therefore evidently a mistake for *gounfanoun*. King Arthur is said to be the ensign or banner, and gonfanon of honour, as the office of bearing the gonfanon, or banner of the Church, was the highest dignity of knighthood.

There hadde he don gret chyvalrie
Thorough his vertu and his maistrie,
And for the love of his lemman
He caste doun many a doughty man.
And next hym daunced dame Fraunchise,
Arayed in fulle noble gyse.
She was not broune ne dunne of hewe,
But white as snowe falle newe.
Hir nose was wrought at poynt devys,[1]
For it was gentyl and tretys;
With eyen gladde, and browes bente;
Hir here doun to hir helis wente.
And she was symple as dowve on tree,
Ful debonaire of herte was she.
She durst never seyn ne do,
But that that hir longed to.
And if a man were in distresse,
And for hir love in hevynesse,
Hir herte wolde have fulle gret pite,
She was so amiable and free.
For were a man for hir bistadde,
She wolde ben right sore adradde,
That she dide over gret outrage,
But she hym holpe his harme to aswage;
Hir thought it elles a vylanye.[2]
And she hadde on a sukkenye,[3]
That not of hempe ne heerdis was;
So fair was noon in alle Arras.
Lord, it was ridled fetysly![4]
Ther nas a poynt, trewely,

---

[1] See vol. vi. p. 222, note 3.

[2] That is, 'It seemed to her a base thing.'

[3] This is the French word *souquenille*, a loose frock such as that worn by carters.

[4] *Ridled* is interpreted by Urry to mean plaited. The original is 'El fu si coillie et jointe.' *Coillir* means to gather or plait; and yet riddled would rather seem to mean pierced like a riddle, just as we see point-lace, with which the *sukency* may have been trimmed, like the surplices of the foreign clergy.

That it nas in his right assise.
Fulle wel clothed was Fraunchise,
For ther is no cloth sittith bet
On damyselle, than doth roket.[1]
A womman wel more fetys is
In roket than in cote, ywis.
The whyte roket rydled faire,
Bitokeneth, that fulle debonaire
And swete was she that it bere.
Bi hir daunced a bachelere;
I can not telle you what he hight,
But faire he was, and of good hight,
Alle hadde he be, I sey no more,
The lordis sone of Wyndesore.[2]
And next that daunced Curtesye,
That preised was of lowe and hye,
For neither proude ne foole was she.
She for to daunce called me,
(I pray God yeve hir good grace!)
Whanne I come first into the place.
She was not nyce, ne outrageous,
But wys and ware, and vertuous,
Of faire speche, and of faire answere;
Was never wight mysseid of hire;
She bar rancour to no wight.
Clere broune she was, and therto bright,
Of face, of body avenaunt,
I wot no lady so plesaunt,
She were worthy for to bene
An emperesse or crowned quene.

---

[1] A *roket*, or *rochet*, is a loose linen frock synonymous with *sukeney*. The name is now appropriated to the short surplice worn by bishops over their cassocks.

[2] In Warton's copy of the original this passage was omitted. It is thus given by Méon:—

'Més biaus étoit, se il fust ores
Fiex au Seignor de Gundesores.'

William of Lorris died about the year 1260; this is a compliment, therefore, paid by him to either Edward or Edmund, sons of Henry III., who began to reign in 1216, and died in 1272.

And by hir wente a knyght dauncyng
That worthy was and wel spekyng,
And ful wel koude he don honour.
The knyght was faire and styf in stour,
And in armure a semely man,
And well biloved of his lemman.[1]
Faire Idilnesse thanne saugh I,
That alwey was me fast by.
Of hir have I, withouten fayle,
Told yow the shap and apparayle;
For (as I seide) loo, that was she
That dide to me so gret bounte,
That she the gate of the gardyn
Undide, and lete me passen in,
And after daunced as I gesse.
And she fulfilled of lustynesse,
That nas not yit twelve yeer of age,
With herte wylde, and thought volage.
Nyce she was, but she ne mente
Noon harme ne slight in hir entente,
But oonely lust and jolyte.
For yong folk, welle witen ye,
Have lytel thought but on her play.
Hir lemman was biside alway,
In sich a gise that he hir kyste
At alle tymes that hym lyste,
That alle the daunce myght it see;
They make no force of pryvete.
For who spake of hem yvel or welle,
They were ashamed neveradelle,
But men myght seen hem kisse there,
As it two yonge dowves were.
For yong was thilke bachelere,
Of beaute wot I noon his pere;
And he was right of sich an age,
As youthe his leef, and sich corage.

[1] The reader will observe that each of the personified qualities is accompanied by a lover, to show that different persons are attracted by different peculiarities.

The lusty folk that daunced there,
And also other that with hem were
That weren alle of her meyne
Ful hende folk, and wys, and free,
And folk of faire port truly,
There were alle comunly.
Whanne I hadde seen the countenaunces
Of hem that ladden thus these daunces,
Thanne hadde I wille to gon and see
The gardyne that so lyked me,
And loken on these faire loreryes,
On pyn trees, cedres, and oliveris.
The daunces thanne eended were;
For many of hem that daunced there,
Were with her loves went awey
Undir the trees to have her pley.
A, Lord! they lyved lustyly!
A gret fool were he sikirly,
That nolde, his thankes,[1] such lyf lede!
For this dar I seyn oute of drede,
That who so might so wel fare,
For better lyf durst hym not care,
For ther nys so good paradys,
As to have a love at his devys.
Oute of that place wente I thoo,
And in that gardyn gan I goo,
Pleyyng alonge fulle meryly.
The God of Love fulle hastely
Unto hym Swete-Lokyng clepte,
No lenger wolde he that she kepte
His bowe of golde, that shoon so bright.
He hadde hym bent anoon ryght;
And he fulle soone sette an ende,
And at a braid[2] he gan it bende,
And toke hym of his arowes fyve,
Fulle sharp and redy for to dryve.

[1] 'With his good will.'—See vol. i. p. 140, note 1.

[2] *At a braid* means 'at a start,' suddenly, from the verb *to abreyde*, to waken up. The original is *tantost*.

Now God that sittith in mageste
Fro deedly woundes he kepe me!
If so be that he hadde me shette,
For if I with his arowe mette,
It hadde me greved sore, iwys.
But I, that no thyng wist of this,
Wente up and doun fulle many a wey,
And he me folwed fast alwey;
But no where wold I reste me,
Tille I hadde in alle the gardyn be.
The gardyn was by mesuryng
Right evene and square in compassing;
It as long was as it was large.
Of fruyt hadde every tree his charge,
But it were any hidous tree
Of which ther were two or three.
There were, and that wote I fulle welle,
Of pomgarnettys a fulle gret delle;
That is a fruyt fulle welle to lyke,
Namely to folk whanne they ben sike.
And trees there were gret foisoun,[1]
That baren notes in her sesoun,
Such as men notemygges calle,
That swote of savour ben withalle.
And almandres gret plente,
Fyges, and many a date tree
There wexen, if men hadde nede,
Thorough the gardyn in length and brede.
Ther was eke wexyng many a spice,
As clowe-gelofre, and lycorice,
Gyngevre, and greyn de Parys,
Canelle, and setewale of prys,[2]

---

[1] *Foison* means abundance. It occurs in Shakspeare:—

'Earth's increase and *foison* plenty,
Barns and garners never empty.'—*Tempest.*

[2] *Clove-gelofre* is the French clou (nail) giroflée, which we call simply *clove*. *Grein de Paris* is *grain of Paradise*, a drug still used to adulterate beer. *Canelle*, cinnamon; *setewale*, valerian. These are

And many a spice delitable,
To eten whan men rise fro table.[1]
And many homly trees ther were,
That peches, coynes, and apples beere,
Medlers, plowmes, perys, chesteyns,
Cherys, of which many oon fayne is,
Notes, aleys, and bolas,[2]
That for to seen it was solas;
With many high lorey and pyn,
Was renged clene alle that gardyn;
With cipres, and with olyvers,
Of which that nygh no plente heere is.
There were elmes grete and stronge,
Maples, asshe, oke, aspe, planes longe,
Fyne ew, popler, and lyndes faire,
And othere trees fulle many a payre.[3]
What sholde I telle you more of it?
There were so many trees yit,
That I sholde alle encombred be,
Er I had rekned every tree.
These trees were sette, that I devise,
One from another in assise[4]
Five fadme or sixe, I trowe so,
But they were high and grete also:
And for to kepe oute welle the sonne,
The croppes were so thikke runne,
And every braunch in other knitte,
And fulle of grene leves sitte,
That sonne might there noon descende,
Lest the tendre grasses shende.

---

most of them exotics, and are opposed to the *homly*, or indigenous trees mentioned three lines after.

[1] These spices appear to have been eaten at dessert, as we sometimes see candied orange peel, ginger, or other pungent sweetmeats.

[2] *Bolas* is the bullace plum.

[3] Here two leaves are torn out of the MS.; the text is therefore taken from Speght.

[4] That is, 'These trees were set five or six fathoms from one another in situation.'

There might men does and roes see,
And of squirels ful gret plente,
From bough to bough alwey lepyng.
Conies there were also playing,
That comen out of her claperes
Of sondry coloures and maneres,
And maden many a turneiyng[1]
Upon the freshe gras spryngyng.
In places sawe I welles there,
In which there no frogges were,
And faire in shadwe was every welle;
But I ne can the number telle
Of stremis smale, that by devise
Myrthe had done come through condise,[2]
Of which the water in rennyng
Gan make a noise fulle lykyng.
About the brinkes of thise welles,
And by the stremes over alle elles
Sprang up the gras, as thikke sette
And soft as ony velvet,
On which men might his lemman leye,
As on a fetherbedde to pleye,
For the erth was ful softe and swete.
Thorough moisture of the welle wete
Sprong up the sote grene gras,
As faire, as thikke, as myster was.[3]
But much amended it the place,
That therth was of sich a grace
That it of floures hath plente,
That both in somer and wintre be.
There sprang the violete alle newe,
And fresshe pervinke riche of hewe,

---

[1] The rabbits are prettily represented as making jousts and tournaments, in their play on the grass.

[2] That is, 'Which Mirthe had, by contrivance, made to come through conduits.'

[3] That is, 'As fair and thick as was necessary.' *Myster* means need.

And floures yelowe, white, and rede;
Sich plenty grewe there never in mede.
Ful gay was alle the ground, and queynt,
And poudred, as men had it peynt,
With many a fressh and sondry flour,
That casten up ful good savour.
I wole nat longe holde you in fable
Of alle this gardyn delectable.
I mote my tongue stynten nede,[1]
For I ne may withouten drede
Naught tellen you the beaute alle,
Ne half the bonte therewithalle.
I wente on right honde and on lift
Aboute the place; it was not left,
Tyl I hadde alle the gardyn bene
In the estres that men might sene.
And thus while I went in my pley,
The God of Love me followed ay.
Right as an hunter can abide
The beste, til he seith his tyde
To sheten, at goodnesse,[2] to the deere,
Whan that hym nedeth go no neere.
And so befelle, I rested me
Besides a welle under a tree,
Which tree in Fraunce men calle a pyn.
But, sith the tyme of kyng Pepyn,[3]
Ne grewe there tree in mannes sight
So faire, ne so welle woxe in hight;
In alle that yerde so high was none.
And spryngyng in a marble stone

---

[1] *Nedes* is the proper adverbial form. *Nede* is used by poetic licence to suit the rhyme. The meaning is, 'I must needs stop my tongue.'

[2] *At goodnesse* means 'at an advantage.'

[3] Pepyn, or Pepin, was the son of Charles Martel, the last of the *Maires du Palais*. On the death of his father, and retirement of his brother, Carloman, to a monastery, he succeeded to the undivided sovereignty of France, and became the founder of the Carlovingian dynasty. He died A.D. 768.

Had nature set, the sothe to telle,
Under that pyn tree a welle.
And on the border alle withoute
Was writen on the stone aboute,
Leteres smale, that seiden thus,
Here starf the faire Narcisus.[1]
Narcisus was a bachelere,
That Love had caught in his daungere,
And in his nette gan hym so streyne,
And dide hym so to wepe and pleyne,
That nede hym must his lyf forgo,
For a faire lady that hight Echo,
Him loved over ony creature,
And gan for hym sich peyne endure,
That on a tyme she hym tolde,
That if he her loven nolde,
That her behoved nedes die,
There lay noon other remedie.
But natheles, for his beaute
So fiers and daungerous was he,
That he nolde graunte hir askyng,[2]
For wepyng, ne for faire praiyng.
And whanne she herd hym werne soo,
She hadde in herte so gret woo,
And took it in so gret dispite,
That she, withoute more respite,
Was deed anoon. But er she dide,
Fulle pitously to God she preide,
That proude hertid Narcisus,
That was in love so daungerous,
Myght on a day ben hampred so
For love, and ben so hoote for woo,
That never he myght to joye atteygne;
And that he shulde feele in every veyne
What sorowe trewe lovers maken,
That ben so velaynesly forsaken.

[1] For the story of Narcissus, see Ovid, *Met.* iii. 346.
[2] At this line the MS. resumes.

This prayer was but resonable,
Therefore God helde it forme and stable:
For Narcisus shortly to telle,
By aventure come to that welle
To resten hym in that shadowing
A day, whanne he come fro huntyng.
This Narcisus hadde suffred paynes
For rennyng alday in the playnes,
And was for thurst in grete distresse
Of heet, and of his werynesse,
That hadde his breth almost bynomen.
Whanne he was to that wel comen,
That shadwid was with braunches grene,
He thoughte of thilke water shene
To drynke and fresshe hym wel withalle;
And doun on knees he gan to falle,
And forth his heed and necke he straught
To drynken of that welle a draught.
And in the water anoon was seen
His nose, his mouth, his yen sheen,
And he therof was alle abasshed;
His owne shadowe was hym bytrasshed.
For welle wende he the forme see
Of a child[1] of gret beaute.
Welle kouthe Love hym wreke thoo
Of daunger and of pride also,
That Narcisus somtyme hym beere.
He quytte hym welle his guerdoun there;
For he musede so in the welle,
That, shortly alle the sothe to telle,
He lovede his owne shadowe soo,
That atte laste he starf for woo.
For whanne he saugh that he his wille
Myght in no maner wey fulfille;
And that he was so faste caught
That he hym kouthe comforte nought,

[1] Child, of course, means young man.

He loste his witte right in that place,
And diede withynne a lytel space.
And thus his warisoun he took
For the lady that he forsook.
Ladyes, I preye ensample takith,
Ye that ayens youre love mistakith:
For if her deth be yow to wite,
God kan ful welle youre while quyte.
Whanne that this lettre of which I telle,
Hadde taught me that it was the welle
Of Narcisus in his beaute,
I gan anoon withdrawe me,
Whanne it felle in my remembraunce,
That hym bitidde such myschaunce.
But at the laste thanne thought I,
That scathles, fulle sykerly,
I myght unto the welle goo.
Wherof shulde I abaisshen soo?
Unto the welle than went I me,[1]
And doun I loutede for to see
The clere water in the stoon,
And eke the gravelle, which that shoon
Down in the botme, as silver fyn,
For of the welle, this is the fyn,
In world is noon so clere of hewe.
The water is evere fresh and newe
That welmeth up with wawis bright
The mountance of two fynger hight.
Aboute it is gras spryngyng,
For moiste so thikke and wel likyng,
The it ne may in wynter dye,
No more than may the see be drye.
Downe atte the botme sette sawe I
Two cristalle stonys craftely
In thilke fresh and faire welle.
But o thing sothly dar I telle,

[1] This line is omitted in the MS., and is supplied from Speght.

That ye wole holde a gret mervayle
Whanne it is tolde, withouten fayle.
For whanne the sonne, clere in sight,
Cast in that welle his bemys bright,
And that the heete descendid is,
Thanne taketh the cristalle stoon ywis,
Agayn the sonne an hundrid hewis,
Blewe, yelowe, and rede, that fresh and newe is.
Yitt hath the merveilous cristalle
Such strengthe, that the place overalle,
Bothe foule and tree, and leves grene,
And alle the yerde in it is seene.
And for to don you to undirstonde,
To make ensample wole I fonde;
Ryght as a myrrour openly
Shewith alle thing that stondith therby,
As welle the colour as the figure,
Withouten ony coverture;
Right so the cristalle stoon shynyng,
Withouten ony disseyvyng,
The entrees of the yerde accusith[1]
To hym that in the water musith.
For evere in which half that ye be,
Ye may welle half the gardyne se.
And if he turne, he may right welle
Sene the remenaunt everydelle.
For ther is noone so litil thyng
So hidde ne closid with shittyng,
That it ne is sene, as though it were
Peyntid in the crystalle there.
This is the mirrour perilous,
In which the proude Narcisus
Sawe alle his face faire and bright,
That made hym swithe to ligge upright.[2]

[1] *Accuseth* is here used in the sense of revealeth.

[2] *Upright* means *resupinus*, with the face upward. *To lie upright* seems, therefore, to be a sort of euphemism for to die, as dead bodies are laid out with their faces upwards.

For who so loketh in that mirrour,
Ther may no thyng ben his socour
That he ne shalle there sene some thyng
That shal hym lede into laughyng.
Fulle many worthy man hath it
Blent; for folk of grettist wit
Ben soone caught heere and awayted;
Withouten respite ben they baited.
Heere comth to folk of newe rage,
Heere chaungith many wight corage;
Heere lith no rede ne witte therto;
For Venus sone, daun Cupido,
Hath sowne there of love the seed,
That help ne lith there noon, ne rede,
So cerclith it the welle aboute.
His gynnes hath he sett withoute
Ryght for to cacche in his panters
These damoysels and bachelers.
Love wille noon other bridde cacche,
Though he sette either nette or lacche.
And for the seed that heere was sowen,
This welle is clepid, as welle is knowen,
The Welle of Love, of verray right,
Of which ther hath ful many a wight
Spoke in bookis dyversely.
But they shulle never so verily
Descripcioun of the welle heere,
Ne eke the sothe of this matere,
As ye shulle, whanne I have undo
The craft that hir bilongith too.
Alleway me liked for to dwelle.
To sene the cristalle in the welle,
That shewide me fulle openly
A thousand thinges fast by.
But I may say, in sory houre
Stode I to loken or to poure.
For sithen I sore sighede,
That mirrour hath me now entriked.

But hadde I first knowen in my wit
The vertues and strengthes of it,
I nolde not have mused there;
Me had bette ben ellis where,
For in the snare I felle anoon,
That hath bitrisshed many oon.
In thilk mirrour sawe I tho,
Among a thousand thinges mo,
A roser chargid fulle of rosis,
That with an hegge aboute enclosid is.
Tho had I sich lust and envie,
That for Parys ne for Pavie,[1]
Nolde I have left to goon and[2] see
There grettist hepe of roses be.
Whanne I was with this rage hent,
That caught hath many a man and shent,
Toward the roser gan I go.
And whanne I was not fer therfro,
The savour of the roses swote
Me smote right to the herte rote,
As I hadde alle embawmed be.[3]
And if I ne hadde endoutet me
To have ben hatid or assailed,
Me thankis,[4] wole I not have failed
To pulle a rose of all that route
To bere in myn honde aboute,
And smellen to it where I wente;
But ever I dredde me to repente,
And leste it grevede or forthought
The lord that thilk gardyn wrought.
Of roses ther were grete wone,
So faire wexe never in Rone.[5]

[1] Pavia is a wealthy town of Lombardy, on the Ticino.
[2] The MS. reads *att*, which is evidently a mere clerical error.
[3] *Be* has been adopted from Speght, as being much better than *me*, the reading of the MS.
[4] See vol. i. p. 140, note 1.
[5] The roses alluded to in the text are those of Provence, at the mouth of the Rhone, a country famous in Chaucer's time, and still celebrated for the production of this flower.

Of knoppes clos, some sawe I there,
And some wel beter woxen were.
And some ther ben of other moysoun,[1]
That drowe nygh to her sesoun,
And spedde hem fast for to spredde;
I love welle sich roses rede;
For brode roses, and open also,
Ben passed in a day or two;
But knoppes wille fresh be
Two dayes atte leest, or thre.
The knoppes gretly liked me,
For fairer may ther nò man se.
Who so myght have oon of alle,
It ought hym ben fulle lief withalle.
Might I gerlond of hem geten,
For no richesse I wolde it leten.
Among the knoppes I chese oon
So faire, that of the remenaunt noon
Ne preise I half so welle as it,
Whanne I avise in my wit.
For it so welle was enlomyned
With colour reed, as welle fyned
As nature couthe it make faire.
And it hath leves wel foure paire,
That Kynde hath sett thorough his knowyng
Aboute the rede roses spryngyng.
The stalke was as rish right,[2]
And theron stode the knoppe upright,
That it ne bowide upon no side.
The swote smelle spronge so wide,
That it dide alle the place aboute.[3]
Whanne I hadde smelled the savour swote,

---

[1] *Moysoun*, or *moisson*, harvest. The meaning of the sentence is, that the roses were in different stages of progress towards maturity, and that some would be sooner fit for harvest, or plucking, than others.

[2] 'As straight as a rush' is still a proverbial simile.

[3] There is a verb wanting to complete the sense. The original is:—

'L'odor de lui entor s'espent;
La soatime qui en ist
Toute la place replenist.'

No wille hadde I fro thens yit goo,
But somdelle neer it wente I thoo,
To take it; but myn hond for drede
Ne dorste I to the rose bede,
For thesteles sharpe of many maners,
Netles, thornes, and hokede breres;
For mych they distourbled me,
For sore I dradde to harmed be.
The God of Love, with bowe bent,
That alle day sette hadde his talent
To pursuen and to spien me,
Was stondyng by a fige tree.
And whanne he sawe hou that I
Hadde chosen so ententifly
The botheum more unto my paie,
Than ony other that I say,
He toke an arowe fulle sharply whette,
And in his bowe whanne it was sette,
He streight up to his ere drough·
The stronge bowe, that was so tough,
And shette att me so wondir smert,
That thorough myn eye[1] unto myn hert
The takel smote, and depe it wente.
And therwithalle such colde me hente,
That under clothes warme and softe,
Sithen that day I have chevered ofte.
Whanne I was hurt thus in stounde,
I felle doun platte unto the grounde.
Myn herte failed and feynted ay,
And long tyme a-swoone I lay.
But whanne I come out of swonyng,
And hadde witt, and my felyng,
I was alle maate, and wende fulle welle
Of bloode have loren a fulle gret delle.
But certes the arowe that in me stode,
Of me ne drewe no drope of blode,

[1] The MS. reads *me nye*, which is a mere clerical error, arising from he similarity in the sound of the two expressions.

For why? I founde my wounde alle drie.
Thanne toke I with myn hondis tweie
The arowe, and ful fast out it plight,
And in the pullyng sore I sight.[1]
So at the last the shaft of tree
I drough out, with the fethers thre.
But yit the hokede heed, ywis,
The which Beaute callid is,
Gan so depe in myn herte passe,
That I it myght nought arace;
But in myn herte stille it stode,
Al bledde I not a drope of blode.
I was bothe anguyssous and trouble.
For the perille that I sawe double,
I nyste what to seye or to do,
Ne gete a leche my woundis to;[2]
For neithir thurgh gras ne rote,
Ne hadde I hope of helpe ne bote.
But to the bothum evermo
Myn herte drewe; for alle my wo,
My thought was in noon other thing.
For hadde it ben in my kepyng,
It wolde have brought my lyf agayn.
For certis evenly, I dar wel seyn,
The sight oonly, and the savour,
Alegged mych of my langour.
Thanne gan I for to drawe me
Toward the bothom faire to se,
And Love hadde gete hym in his throwe
Another arowe into his bowe,
And for to shete gan hym dresse;
The arowis name was Symplesse.
And whanne that Love gan nyghe[3] me nere,
He drowe it up, withouten were,

[1] That is, 'I sighed sore in the act of pulling out the arrows.'
[2] The MS. reads *two*, obviously a mistake of the scrivener.
[3] This is the verb *to neighe*, to draw near. The construction is, 'When Love began to draw nearer to me.'

And shette at me with alle his myght,
So that this arowe anoon right
Thourghout eigh, as it was founde,[1]
Into myn herte hath maad a wounde.
Thanne I anoon dide al my crafte
For to drawen out the shafte,
And therwithalle I sighede efte.
But in myn herte the heed was lefte,
Which ay encreside my desire.
Unto the bothom drawe nere;
And ever mo that me was woo
The more desir hadde I to goo
Unto the roser, where that grewe
The freysshe bothum so bright of hewe.
Betir me were to have leten be,
But it bihoved nedes me
To done right as myn herte badde.
For evere the body must be ladde
Aftir the herte; in wele and woo,
Of force togidre they must goo.
But never this archer wolde feyne
To shete at me with alle his peyne,
And for to make me to hym mete.
The thridde arowe he gan to shete,
Whanne best his tyme he myght espie,
The which was named Curtesie,
Into myn herte he dide avale.
A-swoone I felle, bothe deed and pale;
Long tyme I lay, and stired nought,
Tille I abraide out on my thought.
And faste thanne I avysede me
To drawe out the shafte of tree;
But evere the heed was left bihynde
For ought I couthe pulle or wynde.

---

1 'As it was founde' is added merely to fill up the line. The riginal is:—

'Si que par l'oel où corps m'entra.'

So sore it stikith whanne I was hit,
That by no craft I myght it flit;
But anguyssous and fulle of thought,
I felte such woo, my wounde ay wrought,
That somonede me alway to goo
Toward the rose, that plesede me soo;
But I ne durste in no manere
Bicause the archer was so nere.
For evermore gladly, as I rede,
Brent child of fier hath mych drede.[1]
And, certis, yit for al my peyne,
Though that I sigh, yit arwis reyne,
And grounde quarels sharpe of steelle,
Ne for no payne that I myght feelle,
Yit myght I not my silf witholde
The faire roser to biholde;
For Love me yaf sich hardement
For to fulfille his comaundement.
Upon my fete I rose up thanne
Feble, as a forwoundid man;
And forth to gon my myght I sette,
And for the archer nolde I lette.
Toward the roser fast I drowe;
But thornes sharpe mo than ynowe
Ther were, and also thisteles thikke,
And breres brymme for to prikke,
That I ne myght gete grace
The rowe thornes for to passe
To sene the roses fresshe of hewe.
I must abide, though it me rewe,
The hege aboute so thikke was,
That closide the roses in compas.

---

[1] This proverb appears in numerous forms. Sometimes it is, 'A scalded dog fears cold water.' In Italian, 'Cui serpe mozzica lacerta teme.' The Jews said, 'He that is bitten by a snake fears a rope's end;' and the Cinghalese, 'He that has been beaten with a fire-brand runs away from a fire-fly.'—See *Lessons in Proverbs*, by R. C. TRENCH.

But o thing lyked me right welle;
I was so nygh, I myght fele
Of the bothom the swote odour,
And also see the fresshe colour;
And that right gretly liked me,
That I so neer myght it se.
Sich joie anoon therof hadde I,
That I forgate my maladie.
To sene I hadde siche delit,
Of sorwe and angre I was al quyte,
And of my woundes that I hadde thore;
For no thing liken me myght more,
Than dwellen by the roser ay,
And thens never to passe away.
But whanne a while I hadde be thare,
The god of love, which al to-share
Myn herte with his arwis kene,
Castith hym to yeve me woundis grene.
He shette at me fulle hastily
An arwe named Company,
The which takelle is fulle able
To make these ladies merciable.
Thanne I anoon gan chaungen hewe
For greevaunce of my wounde newe,
That I agayn felle in swonyng,
And sighede sore in compleynyng.
Soore I compleyned that my sore
On me gan greven more and more.
I hadde noon hope of allegeaunce;
So nigh I drow to disperaunce,
I rought of deth, ne of lyf,
Wheder that love wolde me dryf.
Yf me a martir wolde he make,
I myght his power nought forsake.
And while for anger thus I woke,
The God of Love an arowe toke;
Ful sharpe it was and pugnaunt,
And it was callid Faire-Semblaunt,

The which in no wise wolde consente,
That ony lover hym repente,
To serve his love with herte and alle,
For ony perille that may bifalle.
But though[1] this arwe was kene grounde,
As ony rasour that is founde,
To kutte and kerve at the poynt,
The God of Love it hadde anoynt
With a precious oynement,
Somdelle to yeve alegement
Upon the woundes that he hadde
Thorough the body in my herte made,[2]
To helpe her sores, and to cure,
And that they may the bette endure.
But yit this arwe, without more,
Made in myn herte a large sore,
That in fulle grete peyne I abode.
But ay the oynement wente abrode;
Thourghoute my woundes large and wide,
It spredde aboute in every side;
Thorough whos vertu and whos myght,
Myn herte joyfulle was and light.
I hadde ben deed and al-to-shent
But for the precious oynement.
The shaft I drowe out of the arwe,
Rokyng for wo right wondir narwe;[3]
But the heed, which made me smerte,
Lefte bihynde in myn herte
With other foure,[4] I dar wel say,
That never wole be take away,

---

[1] The MS. reads *thought*, which is evidently a mistake of the scrivener.

[2] This line has been scratched out in the MS., and the following written over it: 'That he hadde the body hole made.'

[3] L'Amant is said with much propriety to rock to and fro with pain; but it is not very apparent how he could be said to rock *narrowly* [narwe]. In the original there is nothing to correspond with this line

[4] That is, the other four love-causing arrows. See *ante*, p. 45, note 1.

But the oynement hálpe me wele.
And yit sich sorwe dide I fele,
That al day I chaunged hewe,
Of my woundes fresshe and newe,
As men myght se in my visage.
The arwis were so fulle of rage,
So variaunt of diversitee,
That men in everiche myght se
Bothe gret anoy and eke swetnesse,
And joie meynt with bittirnesse.
Now were they esy, now were they wode,
In hem I felte bothe harme and goode.
Now sore without aleggement,
Now softyng with oynement;
It softned heere, and prikkith there,
Thus ese and anger togeder were.
The God of Love delyverly
Come lepande to me hastily,
And seide to me in gret jape,
'Yelde thee, for thou may not escape!
May no defence availe thee heere;
Therfore I rede make no daungere.
If thou wolt yelde thee hastily,
Thou shalt rather have mercy.
He is a foole in sikernesse,
That with daunger or stoutenesse
Rebellith there that he shulde plese;
In such folye is litel ese.
Be meke, where thou must nedis bowe;
To stryve ageyn is nought thi prowe.
Come at oones, and have ydoo,
For I wole that it be soo.
Thanne yelde thee heere debonairly.'
And I answerid ful hombly,
'Gladly, sir; at youre biddyng,
I wole me yelde in al thyng.
To youre servyse I wole me take;
For God defende that I shulde make

Ageyn youre biddyng resistence;
I wole not don so grete offence,
For if I dide, it were no skile.
Ye may do with me what ye wile,
Save or spille, and also sloo;
Fro you in no wise may I goo.
My lyf, my deth, is in youre honde,
I may not laste out of youre bonde.
Pleyn at youre lyst I yelde me,
Hopyng in herte, that sumtyme ye
Comfort and ese shulle me sende;
Or ellis shortly, this is the eende,
Withouten helthe I mote ay dure,
But if ye take me to youre cure.
Comfort or helthe how shuld I have,
Sith ye me hurt, but ye me save?
The helthe of love mote be founde,
Whereas they token firste her wounde.
And if ye lyst of me to make
Youre prisoner, I wole it take
Of herte and willefully at gree.
Hoolly and pleyn I yelde me,
Without feynyng or feyntise,
To be governed by youre emprise.
Of you I here so mych pris,
I wole ben hool at youre devis
For to fulfille youre lykyng
And to repente for no thyng,
Hopyng to have yit in some tide
Mercy, of that I abide.'
And with that covenaunt yelde I me,
Anoon down knelyng upon my kne,
Proferyng for to kisse his feete;
But for no thyng he wolde me lete,
And seide, 'I love thee bothe and preise,
Sen that thyn answer doth me ese,
For thou answerid so curteisly.
For now I wote wel uttirly,

That thou art gentylle by thi speche.
For though a man fer wolde seche,
He shulde not fynden, in certeyn,
No sich answer of no vileyn;
For sich a word ne myght nought
Issue out of a vilayns thought.
Thou shalt not lesen of thi speche,
For thy helpyng wole I eche,
And eke encresen that I may.
But first I wole that thou obaye,
Fully for thyn avauntage,
Anoone to do me heere homage.
And sith kisse thou shalt my mouthe,
Which to no vilayn was never couthe
For to aproche it, ne for to touche;
For sauff of cherlis I ne vouche[1]
That they shulle never neigh it nere.
For curteis, and of faire manere,
Welle taught, and fulle of gentilnesse
He must ben, that shal me kysse,
And also of fulle high fraunchise,
That shal atteyne to that emprise.
And first of o thing warne I thee,
That peyne and gret adversite
He mote endure, and eke travaile,
That shal me serve, without faile.
But ther ageyns thee to comforte,
And with thi servise to desporte,
Thou mayst fulle glad and joyfulle be
So good a maister to have as me,
And lord of so high renoun.
I bere of Love the gonfenoun,
Of curtesie the banere;
For I am of the silf manere,

[1] The verb *vouche*, and the adverb *sauff*, which, in modern English, make one word, are here disjoined. The meaning is, 'For I do not *vouchsafe* to churls that they should ever come near it.' The kiss was part of the ceremony of doing homage.—See *post*, p. 159, note 2.

Gentile, curteys, meke and fre;
That who ever ententyf be
Me to honoure, doute, and serve,
And also that he hym observe
Fro trespasse and fro vilanye,
And hym governe in curtesie,
With wille and with entencioun;
For whanne he first in my prisoun
Is caught, thanne must he uttirly,
Fro thensforth fulle bisily,
Caste hym gentylle for to be,
If he desire helpe of me.'
Anoon without more delay,
Withouten daunger or affray,
I bicome his man anoon,
And gave hym thankes many a oon,
And knelide doun with hondis joynt,[1]
And made it in my port fulle queynt;
The joye wente to myn herte rote.
Whanne I hadde kissed his mouth so swote,
I hadde sich myrthe and sich likyng,
It cured me of langwisshing.
He askide of me thanne hostages:—
'I have,' he seide, 'taken fele homages
Of oon and other, where I have bene
Disteyned ofte, withouten wene.[2]
These felouns fulle of falsite,
Have many sithes biguyled me,
And thorough her falshede her lust achieved,
Wherof I repente and am agreved.
And I hem gete in my daungere,
Her falshede shulle they bie fulle dere.
But for I love thee, I seie thee pleyn,
I wole of thee be more certeyn;

[1] This was the form of doing homage.—See *post*, p. 159, note 2, and vol. iv. p. 141, note 2.

[2] That is, 'I have often received the homage of persons, by whom I have, notwithstanding, without doubt, been often disgraced.'

For thee so sore I wole now bynde,
That thou away ne shalt not wynde,
For to denyen the covenaunt,
Or don that is not avenaunt.
That thou were fals it were gret reuthe,
Sith thou semest so fulle of treuthe.'
'Sire, if thee lyst to undirstande,
I merveile the askyng this demande.
For why or wherfore shulde ye
Ostages or borwis aske of me,
Or ony other sikirnesse,
Sith ye wote[1] in sothfastnesse,
That ye have me surprised so,
And hole myn herte, taken me fro,
That it wole do for me no thing,
But if it be at youre biddyng?
Myn herte is youres, and myn right nought
As it bihoveth, in dede and thought,
Ready in alle to worche youre wille,
Whether so turne to good or ille.
So sore it lustith you to plese,
No man therof may you disese.[2]
Ye have theron sette sich justise,
That it is werreid in many wise.
And if ye doute it nolde obeye,
Ye may therof do make a keye,
And holde it with you for ostage.'
'Now certis this is noon outrage,'
Quoth Love, 'and fully I accord;
For of the body he is fulle lord,
That hath the herte in his tresour;
Outrage it were to asken more.'
Thanne of his awmener[3] he drough,
A litell keye fetys ynowgh,

[1] The MS. reads *wole*.

[2] *Disese* is put for *desseize*, meaning to *oust*. Siezin is the legal word for possession.

[3] This was a purse for carrying money to be bestowed in alms.

Which was of gold polisshed clere
And seide to me, 'With this keye heere
Thyn herte to me now wole I shette;
For alle my jowelle[1] loke and knette,
I bynde undir this litel keye,
That no wight may carie aweye;
This keye is fulle of gret poeste.'
With which anoon he touchide me,
Undir the side fulle softly,
That he myn herte sodeynly,
Without anoy hadde spered,
That yit right nought it hath me dered.[2]
Whanne he hadde don his wille al oute,
And I hadde putte hym out of doute,
'Sire,' I seide, 'I have right gret wille,
Youre lust and plesaunce to fulfille.
Loke ye my servise take atte gree,
By thilke feith ye owe to me.
I seye nought for recreaundise,
For I nought doute of youre servise.[3]
But the servaunt traveileth in vayne,
That for to serven doth his payne
Unto that lord, which in no wise,
Kan him no thank for his servyse.
Love seide, 'Dismaie thee nought,
Syn thou for sokour hast me sought,
In thank thi servise wole I take,
And high of degre wole thee make,
If wikkidnesse ne hyndre thee;
But (as I hope) it shal nought be.
To worshipe no wight by aventure
May come, but if he peyne endure.[4]
Abide and suffre thy distresse,
That hurtith now; it shal be lesse,

---

[1] *Jowelle* is an adaptation of the old French word *joaille*, jewellery.
[2] *Dered* means here, hurt or injured.
[3] That is, 'I am not afraid to undertake your service.'
[4] This appears to be an allusion to the proverb, 'Via crucis via lucis.'

I wote my silf what may thee save,
What medicyne thou wouldist have.
And if thi trouthe to me thou kepe,
I shal unto thyn helpyng eke,
To cure thy woundes and make hem clene,
Where so they be olde or grene;
Thou shalt be holpen at wordis fewe.
For certeynly thou shalt welle shewe,
Where that thou servest with good wille,
For to compleysshen and fulfille
My comaundementis day and nyght,
Whiche I to lovers yeve of right.'
'Ah, sire, for Goddis love,' seide I,
'Er ye passe hens, ententyfly
Youre comaundementis to me ye say,
And I shalle kepe hem if I may,
For hem to kepen is alle my thought.
And if so be I wote hem nought,
Thanne may I unwityngly.
Wherfore I pray you enterely,
With alle myn herte, me to lere,
That I trespasse in no manere.'
The god of love thanne chargide me
Anoon, as ye shalle here and see,
Worde by worde, by right emprise,
So as the Romance shalle devise.
The maister lesith his tyme to lere,
Whanne the disciple wole not here.
It was but veyn on hym to swynke,
That on his lernyng wole not thenke.
Who so luste love, let hym entende,
For now the Romance bigynneth to amende.
Now is good to here in fay,
If ony be that can it say,
And poynte it as the resoun is
Set; for other gate, ywys,
It shalle nought welle in alle thyng
Be brought to good undirstondyng.

For a reder that poyntith ille,
A good sentence may ofte spille.[1]
The book is good at the eendyng,
Maad of newe and lusty thyng;
For who so wole the eendyng here,
The crafte of love he shalle nowe lere,
If that ye wole so long abide,
Tyl I this Romance may unhide,
And undo the signifiance
Of this dreme into Romance.[2]
The sothfastnesse that now is hidde,.
Without coverture shalle be kidde.
Whanne I undon have this dremyng,
Wherynne no word is of lesyng.
'Vilanye, atte the bigynnyng,
I wole,' sayd Love, 'over alle thyng
Thou leve, if thou wolt ne be
Fals, and trespasse ageyns me.
I curse and blame generaly
Alle hem that loven vilanye;
For vilanye makith vilayn
And by his dedis a cherle is seyn.
Thise vilayns arn withouten pitee,
Frendshipe, love, and alle bounte,
I nyl resseyve unto my servise
Hem that ben vilayns of emprise.
'But undirstonde in thyn entent,
That this is not myn entendement,
To clepe no wight in noo ages
Oonly gentill for his lynages.
But who so is vertuous,
And in his port nought outrageous,
Whanne sich oon thou seest thee biforn,
Though he be not gentille born,

[1] To *pointe* means, here, to make the proper pauses in reading, to punctuate with the voice.

[2] *Romaunce* signifies in this place the French, or corrupt Roman language.—See vol. v. p. 58, note 3.

Thou maist welle seyn this in soth,
That he is gentil, bycause he doth
As longeth to a gentilman;
Of hem noon other deme I can.
For certeynly withouten drede,
A cherle is demed by his dede,
Of hie or lowe, as ye may see,
Or of what kynrede that he bee.[1]
Ne say nought for noon yvel wille
Thyng that is to holden stille;
It is no worshipe to mysseye.
Thou maist ensample take of Keye,
That was somtyme for mysseiyng,
Hated bothe of olde and yong.
As fer as Gaweyn the worthy,
Was preised for his curtesie,
Keye was hated, for he was felle,
Of word dispitous and cruelle.[2]
Wherfore be wise and aqueyntable,
Goodly of word, and resonable
Bothe to lesse and eke to more.
And whanne thou comest there men are,
Loke that thou have in custome ay,
First to salue hym if thou may:
And if it falle, that of hem somme
Salue thee first, be not domme,
But quyte hym curteisly anoon
Without abidyng, er they goon.
'For no thyng eke thy tunge applye
To speke wordis of ribauldrye.
To vilayne speche in no degre
Late never thi lippe unbounden be.

---

1 This theme is enlarged upon in *The Wife of Bathes Tale.*—See vol. ii. p. 82.

2 Sir Keye and Sir Gaweyn were two knights of King Arthur's round table; the former was the seneschal, and was as remarkable for the brutality of his manners, as the latter for his courtesy. Thus, in the *Roman de Merlin*:—'Si Keux est felon et dénaturé.'

For I nought holde hym, in good feith,
Curteys, that foule wordis seith.
And alle wymmen serve and preise,
And to thy power her honour reise.
And if that ony myssaiere
Dispise wymmen, that thou maist here,
Blame hym, and bidde hym holde hym stille.
And set thy myght and alle thy wille
Wymmen and ladies for to plese,
And to do thyng that may hem ese,
That they ever speke good of thee,
For so thou maist best preised be.
'Loke fro pride thou kepe thee wele;[1]
For thou maist bothe perceyve and fele,
That pride is bothe foly and synne;
And he that pride hath hym withynne,
Ne may his herte in no wise,
Meken ne souplen to servyse.
For pride is founde, in every part,
Contrarie unto Loves art.
And he that loveth trewly,
Shulde hym contene jolily,
Without pride in sondry wise,
And hym disguysen in queyntise.
For queynt array, without drede,
Is no thyng proude, who takith hede;
For fresh array, as men may see,
Without pride may ofte be.
Mayntene thy silfe aftir thi rent,
Of robe and eke of garnement;
For many sithe faire clothyng
A man amendith in mych thyng.
And loke alwey that they be shape,
(What garnement that thou shalt make)
Of hym that kan best do,
With alle that perteyneth therto.

[1] See vol. iv. p. 152, note 4.

Poyntis and sleves be welle sittande,
Right and streght on the hande.
Of shone and bootes, newe and faire,
Loke at the leest thou have a paire;
And that they sitte so fetisly,
That these ruyde may uttirly
Merveyle, sith that they sitte so pleyne,
How they come on or off ageyne.[1]
Were streit gloves, with awmere
Of silk. And alwey with good chere
Thou yeve, if thou have richesse;
And if thou have nought, spend the lesse.
Alwey be mery, if thou may,
But waste not thy good alway.
Have hatte of floures fresh as May,
Chapelett of roses of Whissonday;[2]
For sich array ne costneth but lite.
Thyn hondis wasshe, thy teeth make white,
And lete no filthe upon thee bee.
Thy nailes blak, if thou maist see,
Voide it alwey delyverly,
And kembe thyn heed right jolily.[3]
Farce not thi visage in no wise,
For that of love is not themprise;
For love doth haten, as I fynde,
A beaute that cometh not of Kynde.[4]
Alwey in herte I rede thee,
Glad and mery for to be,
And be as joyfulle as thou can;
Love hath no joye of sorowful man.

[1] This was a piece of mediæval dandyism.—See vol. i. p. 86, note 4.

[2] Whitsuntide is still the season of great festivity in the rural districts of England.

[3] —— Careant rubigine dentes,
Nec vagus in laxâ pes tibi pelle natet.
Nec male deformet rigidos tonsura capillos,
Sit coma, sit doctâ barba resecta manu;
Et nihil emineat, et sint sine sordibus ungues.
OVID.—*Ars Am.* ii. 515.

[4] The poet may, perhaps, have had in his mind the 'simplex munditiis' of Horace.

That yvelle is fulle of curtesie,
That knowith in his maladie;[1]
For ever of love the siknesse
Is meynde with swete and bitternesse.
The sore of love is merveilous;
For now the lover is joyous,
Now can he pleyne, now can he grone,
Now can he syngen, now maken mone
To day he pleyneth for hevynesse,
To morowe he pleyneth for jolynesse.
The lyf of love is fulle contrarie,
Which stoundemele can ofte varie.
But if thou canst mirthis make,
That men in gre wolde gladly take,
Do it goodly, I comaunde thee;
For men sholde, wheresoevere they be,
Do thing that hem sittyng[2] is,
For therof cometh good loos and pris.
Whereof that thou be vertuous,
Ne be not straunge ne daungerous.
For if that thou good ridere be,
Prike gladly that men may se.
In armes also if thou konne,[3]
Pursue, to thou a name hast wonne.[4]
And if thi voice be faire and clere,
Thou shalt maken no[5] gret daungere.
Whanne to synge they goodly prey,
It is thi worship for to obeye.

---

[1] That is, 'That evil [*scil.* love] is full of courtesy, which, even in the height of its malady, does not lose its self-possession.'

[2] *Sittyng* means becoming.

[3] That is, 'If you are skilful in jousting.' *Faire les armes* is the technical phrase for to joust.

[4] That is, 'Continue to practise jousting until thou hast won a name.' The original is—

'Chascun doit faire en toutes places
Ce qu'il set qui miex li avient.'

[5] *No* is omitted by mistake in the MS.

Also to you it longith ay,
To harpe and gitterne, daunce and play,
For if he can wel foote and daunce,[1]
It may hym greetly do avaunce.
Among[2] eke, for thy lady sake,
Songes and complayntes that thou make;
For that wole meven in hir herte,
Whanne they reden of thy smerte.
Loke that no man for scarce[3] thee holde,
For that may greve thee manyfolde.
Resoun wole that a lover be
In his yiftes more large and fre,
Than cherles that ben not of lovyng.
For who therof can ony thyng,
He shal be leef ay for to yeve,
In londes[4] lore who so wolde leve;
For he that thorough a sodeyn sight,
Or for a kyssyng, anoon right
Yaff hoole his herte in wille and thought,
And to hymsilf kepith right nought,
Aftir this swiffte, it is good resoun,
He yeve his good in abandoun.
'Now wole I shortly heere reherce,
Of that I have seid in verse,
Al the sentence by and by,
In wordis fewe compendiously,
That thou the better mayst on hem thenke,
Whether so it be thou wake or wynke;
For that wordis litel greve,
A man to kepe, whanne it is breve.
'Who so with Love wole goon or ride
He mote be curteis, and voide of pride,

[1] Si vox est, canta; si mollia brachia, salta.
OVID.—*Ars Am.* ii.

[2] Among means, 'at intervals.' The meaning is, 'Remember to make songs mingled with complaints.'

[3] *Scarce* means penurious. The original word is *aver*.

[4] *Londes* is evidently a mistake for *Loves*. The meaning is, 'Whoso would believe in Love's lore, shall be always ready to give.'

Mery and fulle of jolite,
And of largesse a losel be.[1]
'Firste I joyne thee that heere in penaunce,
That evere withoute repentaunce,
Thou sette thy thought in thy lovyng
To laste withoute repentyng;
And thenke upon thi myrthis swete,
That shalle folowe aftir whan ye mete.
'And for thou trewe to love shalt be,
I wole and comaunde thee,
That in oo place thou sette, alle hoole,
Thyn herte, withoute halfen doole,
For trecherie and sikernesse;
For I lovede nevere doublenesse.
To many his herte that wole departe,
Everiche shal have but litel parte.
But of hym drede I me right nought,
That in oo place settith his thought.
Therfore in oo place it sitte,
And lat it nevere thennys flitte.
For if thou yevest it in lenyng,
I holde it but wrecchid thyng.
Therfore yeve it hoole and quyte,
And thou shalt have the more merite.
If it be lent than aftir soone,
The bounte and the thank is doone;
But, in love, fre yeven thing
Requyrith a gret guerdonyng.
Yeve it in yift al quyte fully,
And make thi gift debonairly;
For men that yift holde more dere
That yeven is with gladsome chere.
That yift nought to preisen is
That men yeveth maugre his.[2]

---

[1] These directions answer to the eighteenth statute in *The Court of Love*.—See vol iv. p. 147.

[2] 'In spite of him.' *His* agrees with the noun *gré* in maugre.

Whanne thou hast yeven thyn herte, as I
Have seid thee heere openly,
Thanne aventures shulle thee falle,
Which harde and hevy ben withalle.
For ofte whan thou bithinkist thee
Of thy lovyng, where so thou be,
Fro folk thou must depart in hie,
That noon perceyve thi maladie,
But hide thyn harme thou must aloon,[1]
And go forthe sole, and make thy mone.
Thou shalt no while be in oo state,
But whilom colde and whilom hate;
Now reed as rose, now yelowe and fade.
Such sorowe I trowe thou never hadde.
Cotidien, ne quarteyne,
It is not so ful of peyne.
For ofte tymes it shalle falle
In love, among thy peynes alle,
That thou thi silf alle holy,
Foryeten shalt so utterly,
That many times thou shalt be
Stille as an image of tree,
Domme as a stoon, without styrryng
Of foote or honde, without spekyng.
Than sone after alle thy peyne,
To memorie shalt thou come ageyne,
As man abasshed wondre sore,
And after sighen more and more.
For wite thou wele, withouten wene,
In sich a state fulle ofte have bene
That have the yvell of love assaiede,
Wherthrough thou art so dismaide.
'After, a thought shal take thee so,
That thy love is to fer the fro:
Thou shalt say, 'God, what may this be,
That I ne may my ladie se?

[1] Here a leaf is wanting in the MS.; the text is taken from Speght.

Myne herte aloon is to her go,
And I abide alle sole in wo,
Departed from myn owne thought,
And with myne yen se right nought.
Alas, myn yen sene I ne may,
My carefulle herte to convay!
Myn hertes guide, but they be,
I praise nothing what ever they se.
Shulle they abyde thanne? nay;
But go and visite without delay
That myn herte desireth so.
For certeynly, but if they go,
A foole my silf I may wel holde,
Whan I ne se what myn herte wolde.
Wherfore I wol gone her to sene,
Or esed shal I never bene,
But I have som tokenyng.'
Then goist thou forthe without dwellyng;
But ofte thou faylest of thy desyre,
Er thou maiest come her any nere,[1]
And wastest in vayn thi passage.
Thanne fallest thou in a newe rage;
For want of sight thou gynnest morne,
And homewarde pensyf thou dost retorne.
In gret myscheef thanne shalt thou bee,
For thanne agayne shalle come to thee
Sighes and pleyntes with newe woo,
That no ycchyng prikketh soo.
Who wote it nought, he may go lere,
Of hem that bien love so dere.
No thyng thyn herte appesen may,
That ofte thou wolt goon and assay,
If thou maist seen by aventure
Thi lyves joy, thine hertis cure,
So that bi grace, if thou myght
Atteyne of hire to have a sight.

[1] Here the MS. resumes.

Thanne shalt thou done noon other dede,
But with that sight thyne eyen fede.
That faire fresh whanne thou maist see,
Thyne herte shalle so ravysshed be,
That nevere thou woldest, thi thankis, lete,
Ne remove, for to see that swete.
The more thou seest in sothfastnesse,
The more thou coveytest of that swetnesse,
The more thine herte brenneth in fier,
The more thine herte is in desire.
For who considreth every deelle,
It may be likned wondir welle,
The peyne of love unto a fere;
For evermore thou neighest nere
Thought, or whoo so that it bee,[1]
For verray sothe I telle it thee,
The hatter evere shalle thou brenne,
As experience shalle thee kenne.
Where so comest in ony coost,
Who is next fuyre he brenneth moost.
And yitt forsothe for alle thine hete,
Though thou for love swelte and swete,
Ne for no thyng thou felen may,
Thou shalt not willen to passen away.
And though thou go, yitt must thee, nede,
Thenke alle day, on hir fair hede,
Whom thou biheelde with so good wille;
And holde thi silf biguyled ille,
That thou ne haddest noon hardement,
To shewe hir ought of thyne entent.
Thyne herte fulle sore thou wolt dispise,
And eke repreve of cowardise,
That thou so dulle in every thing,
Were domme for drede, without spekyng.

[1] This passage is much expanded, and there is nothing in the original exactly corresponding with this line, which appears to be corrupt, and unintelligible; for the lover could not be said to approach nearer to thought, unless thought be personified.

Thou shalt eke thenke thou didest folye,
That thou were hir so fast bye,
And durst not auntre thee to say
Som thyng er thou cam away;
For thou haddist no more wonne,
To speke of hir whanne thou bigonne:
But yit if she wolde for thy sake,
In armes goodly thee have take,
It shulde have be more worth to thee,
Than of tresour gret plente.
'Thus shalt thou morne and eke compleyne,
And gete enchesoun to goone ageyne,
Unto thy walke, or to thi place,
Where thou biheelde her fleshly face.
And never for fals suspeccioun,
Thou woldest fynde occasioun,
For to gone unto hire hous.
So art thou thanne desirous,
A sight of hir for to have,
If thou thine honour myghtest save,
Or ony erande myghtist make
Thider, for thi loves sake,
Fulle fayn thou woldist, but for drede
Thou gost not, lest that men take hede;
Wherfore I rede in thi goyng,
And also in thyne ageyne comyng,
Thou be welle ware that men ne wite;
Feyne thee other cause than itte,
To go that weye, or fast bye;
To hele wel is no folye.[1]
And if so be it happe thee,
That thou thi love there maist see,
In siker wise thou hir salewe,
Wherwith thi colour wole transmewe,
And eke thy blode shal al to quake,
Thyne hewe eke chaungen for hir sake.

[1] This appears to be a proverbial expression. To *hele* is to hide, and the original is—

'Car c'est grant sens de soi celer.'

But word and witte, with chere fulle pale,
Shulle wante for to telle thy tale.
And if thou maist so fer forth wynne,
That thou resoun derst bigynne,
And woldist seyn thre thingis or mo,
Thou shalt fulle scarsly seyn the two.
Though thou bithenke thee never so welle,
Thou shalt foryete yit somdelle.
But if thou dele with trecherie.[1]
For fals lovers mowe alle folye
Seyn what hem lust withouten drede,
They be so double in hir falshede,
For they in herte cunne thenke a thyng
And seyne another, in her spekyng.
And whanne thi speche is eendid alle,
Ryght thus to thee it shalle byfalle:
If ony word thanne come to mynde,
That thou to seye hast left bihynde,
Thanne thou shalt brenne in gret martire;
For thou shalt brenne as ony fiere,
This is the stryf and eke the affray,
And the batele that lastith ay.
This bargeyn ende may never take,
But if that she thi pees wille make.
'And whanne the nyght is comen, anoon
A thousand angres shalle come uppon.
To bedde as fast thou wolt thee dight,
Where thou shalt have but smal delite;
For whanne thou wenest for to slepe,
So fulle of peyne shalt thou crepe,
Sterte in thi bedde aboute fulle wide,
And turne fulle ofte on every side;
Now dounward groffe,[2] and now upright,
And walowe in woo the longe nyght,

[1] That is, 'Unless you are a deceiver, or if you are really sincere, you will forget half of what you intended to say.'

[2] That is, 'Now grovel on your face, now lie on your back.' In the original:—

'Une heure envers, autre eure adens.'

Thine armys shalt thou sprede abrode,
As man in werre were forweriede.
Thanne shalle thee come a remembraunce
Of hir shappe and hir semblaunce,
Wherto none other may be pere.
And wite thou wel withoute were,
That thee shal seme somtyme that nyght,
That thou hast hir that is so bright,
Naked bitwene thyne armes there,
Alle sothfastnesse as though it were.
Thou shalt make castels thanne in Spayne,[1]
And dreme of joye, alle but in vayne,
And thee deliten of right nought,
While thou so slomrest in that thought,
That is so swete and delitable,
The which in soth nys but fable,
For it ne shalle no while laste.
Thanne shalt thou sighe and wepe faste,
And say, 'Dere God, what thing is this?
My dreme is turned alle amys,
Which was fulle swete and apparent,
But now I wake it is al shent!
Now yede this mery thought away.
Twenty tymes upon a day
I wolde this thought wolde come ageyne,
For it alleggith welle my peyne.
It makith me fulle of joyfulle thought,
It sleth me that it lastith noght.
A, Lord! why nyl ye me soccoure?
The joye I trowe that I'langoure,
The deth I wolde me shulde sloo,
While I lye in hir armes twoo.

[1] Châteaux en Espagne. M. Lantin de Dammerey says that any chimerical fancy is so called, because all the castles in Spain were destroyed lest they should shelter the Moors. He quotes an old French poet, Pierre Guingoire, to show that they were also called *châteaux en Asie*. It is more probable that these wild creations of the imagination derived their names from their resemblance to those fabulous tales of magnificence in which the Moors and Asiatics delight.

Myne harme is harde withouten wene,
My gret unese fulle ofte I meene.
But wolde Love do so I myght
Have fully joye of hir so bright,
My peyne were quytte me rychely.
Allas, to grete a thing aske I!
It is but foly, and wrong wenyng,
To axe so outrageous a thyng.
And who so axith folily,
He mote be warned hastily;
And I ne wote what I may say,
I am so fer out of the way;
For I wolde have fulle gret likyng,
And fulle gret joye of lasse thing.
For wolde she of hir gentylnesse,
Without more, me oonys kysse,
It were to me a grete guerdoun,
Releese of alle my passioun.
But it is harde to come therto;
Alle is but folye, that I do,
So high I have myne herte sette,
Where I may no comforte gette.
I wote not where I seye welle or nought;
But this I wote wel in my thought,
That it were better of hir aloone,
For to stynte my woo and moone,
A loke on hir i-caste goodly,
Than for to have al utterly,
Of another alle hoole the pley.
A Lord, wher[1] I shalle byde the day
That evere she shalle my lady be?
He is fulle cured, and may hir see.
A! God! whanne shal the dawning springe?
To liggen thus is an angry thyng;
I have no joye thus heere to lye,
Whanne that my love is not me bye.

[1] Whether.

A man to lyen hath gret disese,
Which may not slepe ne reste in ese.
I wolde it dawed, and were now day,
And that the nyght were went away,
For were it day, I wolde uprise.
A! slowe sonne, shewe thine enprise!
Spede thee to sprede thy beemys bright,
And chace the darknesse of the nyght,
To putte away the stoundes stronge,
Which in me lasten alle to longe.'
'The nyght shalt thou contene so,
Withoute rest, in peyne and woo;
If evere thou knewe of love distresse,
Thou shalt mowe lerne in that siiknesse.
And thus enduryng shalt thou lye
And ryse on morwe up erly,
Out of thy bedde, and harneyse thee
Er evere dawnyng thou maist see.
Alle pryvyly thanne shalle thou goon,
What whider it be, thi silf alloon,
For reyne, or hayle, for snowe, for slete,
Thider she dwellith that is so swete,
The which may falle aslepe be,
And thenkith but lytel upon thee.
Thanne shalt thou goon, ful foule afeerd,
Loke if the gate be unspered,
And waite without in woo and peyne,
Fulle yvel a-coolde in wynde and reyne.
Thanne shal thou go the dore bifore,
If thou maist fynde ony score,[1]
Or hoole, or reeft, what evere it were;
Thanne shalt thou stoupe, and lay to ere,
If they withynne a slepe be;
I mene alle save thy lady free.

---

[1] *Score* appears to mean a crack in the wall or door. The original is—

'Et se tu treuves fendéure.'

Whom wakyng if thou maist aspie,
Go putte thi silf in jupartie,
To aske grace, and thee bimene,
That she may wite, without wene,
That thou al nyght no rest hast hadde,
So sore for hir thou were bystadde.
Wommen wel ought pite to take
Of hem that sorwen for her sake.
And loke, for love of that relyke,
That thou thenke noon other lyke.
For whanne thou hast so gret annoy,
Shalle kysse thee er thou go away,
And holde that in fulle gret deynte.
And for that no man shal thee see
Bifore the hous, ne in the way,
Loke thou be goone ageyn er day.
Suche comyng, and such goyng,
Such hevynesse, and such walkyng,
Makith lovers, withouten ony wene,
Under her clothes pale and lene,
For Love leveth colour ne cleernesse;
Who loveth trewe hath no fatnesse.[1]
Thou shalt wel by thy silf see
That thou must nedis assaid be.
For men that shape hem other weye
Falsly her ladyes to bitraye,
It is no wonder though they be fatt;
With false othes her loves they gatt;
For ofte I see suche losengours
Fatter than abbatis or priours.
'Yet with o thing I thee charge,
That is to seye, that thou be large
Unto the mayde, that hir doith serve,
So best hir thanke thou shalt deserve.

---

[1] This is evidently imitated from Ovid's *Ars Amandi*:—
'Palleat mirus amans: hic est color aptus amanti.'—i. 729.
'Arguat et macies animum.'—i. 733.

Yeve hir yiftes, and gete hir grace,
For so thou may thank purchace,
That she thee worthy holde and free.
Thi lady, and alle that may thee see,
Also hir servauntes worshipe ay,
And plese as myche as thou may;
Grete good thorough hem may come to thee,
Bicause with hir they ben pryve.
They shal hir telle hou they thee fande
Curteis and wys, and welle doande,
And she shalle preise thee welle the more.[1]
Loke oute of londe thou be not fore;[2]
And if such cause thou have, that thee
Bihoveth to gone out of contree,
Leve hoole thin herte in hostage,
Tille thou ageyn make thi passage.
Thenke longe to see the swete thyng
That hath thine herte in hir kepyng.
'Now have I tolde thee, in what wise
A lovere shalle do me servise.
Do it thanne, if thou wolt have
The meede that thou aftir crave.'
Whanne Love alle this hadde boden me,
I seide hym:—'Sire, how may it be
That lovers may in such manere,
Endure the peyne ye have seid heere?

The whole passage is taken from the *Ars Amandi*:—

Nec pudor ancillas, ut quæque erit ordine prima,
Nec tibi sit servos demeruisse pudor.
Nomine quenquam tuo (levis est impensa) roganti,
Porrige fortunæ munera parva tuæ.
Porrige et ancillæ, quâ pœnas luce pependit
Lusa maritali Gallica veste manus.
Fac plebem (mihi crede) tuam.'—*Ars Amandi*, ii. 251.

[2] *Fore* means absent, from the Latin *foris*, abroad. This is also from Ovid:—

'Sed mora tuta brevis; lentescunt tempore curæ
Vanescitque absens, et novus intrat amor.'
Ars Amandi, ii. 357.

I merveyle me wonder faste,
How ony man may lyve or laste
In such peyne, and such brennyng,
In sorwe and thought, and such sighing,
Aye[1] unrelesed woo to make,
Whether so it be they slepe or wake.
In such annoy contynuely,
As helpe me God this merveile I
How man, but he were maad of stele,
Myght lyve a monthe, such peynes to fele.'
The God of Love thanne seide me,
'Freend, by the feith I owe to thee,
May no man have good, but he it bye.
A man loveth more tendirly
The thyng that he hath bought most dere,
For wite thou welle, withouten were,
In thanke that thyng is taken more,
For which a man hath suffred sore.
Certis no wo ne may atteyne,
Unto the sore of loves peyne.
Noon yvel therto ne may amounte,
No more than a man counte
The dropes that of the water be.
For drye as welle the greet see
Thou myghtist, as the harmes telle
Of hem that with Love dwelle
In servyse; for peyne hem sleeth,
And that ech wolde fle the deeth,
And trowe thei shulde nevere escape,
Nere that Hope couthe hem make,
Glad as man in prisoun sett,
And may not geten for to ete
But barly breed, and watir pure,
And lyeth in vermyn and in ordure;
With alle this yitt can he lyve,
Good Hope such comfort hath hym yeve,

[1] The MS. reads *A yee*; evidently a mere clerical error.

Which maketh wene that he shalle be
Delyvered and come to liberte;
In fortune is his fulle trist.
Though he lye in strawe or dust,
In Hoope is alle his susteynyng.
And so for lovers in her wenyng,
Whiche love hath shitte in his prisoun;
Good-Hope is her salvacioun.
Good-Hope, how sore that they smerte,
Yeveth hem bothe wille and herte
To profre her body to martire;
For Hope so sore doth hem desire
To suffre ech harme that men devise,
For joye that aftirward shalle aryse.
Hope in desire cacche victorie,
In hope of love is alle the glorie,
For Hope is alle that love may yeve;
Nere Hope, ther shulde no lover lyve.
Blessid be Hope, which with desire,
Avaunceth lovers in such manere.
Good-Hope is curteis for to plese,
To kepe lovers from alle disese.
Hope kepith his londe, and wole abide,
For ony perille that may betyde;
For Hope to lovers, as most cheef,
Doth hem endure alle myscheef;
Hope is her helpe whanne myster is.
And I shalle yeve thee eke iwys,
Three other thingis, that gret solas
Doith to hem that be in my las.
'The first good that may be founde,
To hem that in my lace be bounde,
Is Swete-Thought,[1] for to recorde
Thing wherwith thou canst accorde
Best in thyne herte; where she be,
Thenkyng in absence is good to thee.

[1] This personage is called Privy-Thought in *The Court of Love.*—See vol. iv. p. 176.

Whanne ony lover doth compleyne,
And lyveth in distresse and in peyne,
Thanne Swete-Thought shal come as blyve,
Awey his angre for to dryve.
It makith lovers to have remembraunce
Of comfort, and of high plesaunce,
That Hope hath hight hym for to wynne.
For Thought anoon thanne shalle bygynne,
As ferre, God wote, as he can fynde,
To make a mirrour of his mynde,[1]
For to biholde he wole not lette.
Hir person he shalle afore hym sette,
Hir laughing eyen, persaunt and clere,
Hir shappe, hir fourme, hir goodly chere,
Hir mouth that is so gracious,
So swete, and eke so saverous,
Of alle hir fetures he shalle take heede,
His eyen with alle hir lymes fede.
'Thus Swete-Thenkyng shalle aswage
The peyne of lovers, and her rage.
Thi joye shalle double, withoute gesse,
Whanne thou thenkist on hir semlynesse,
Or of hir laughing, or of hir chere,
That to thee made thi lady dere.
This comfort wole I that thou take,
And if the next thou wolt forsake
Which is not the lesse saverous,
Thou shuldist not ben to daungerous.
'The secounde shal be Swete-Speche,
That hath to many oon be leche,
To bringe hem out of woo and were,
And helpe many a bachilere,
And many a lady sent socoure,
That have loved paramour,
Thorough spekyng, whanne they myght heere,
Of her lovers to hem so dere.

[1] This excellent image occurs in the *Troylus and Cryseyde*.—See vol. v. p. 30, note 4.

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To me it voidith alle her smerte,
The which is closed in her herte.
In herte it makith hem glad and light,
Speche, whanne they mowe have sight.
And therfore now it cometh to mynde,
In olde dawes as I fynde,
That clerkis writen that hir knewe,
Ther was a lady fresh of hewe,
Which of hir love made a songe
On hym, for to remembre amonge,
In which she seide, 'Whanne that I here
Speken of hym that is so dere,
To me it voidith alle smerte,
Iwys he sittith so nere myne herte.
To speke of hym at eve or morwe,
It cureth me of alle my sorwe.
To me is noon so high plesaunce
As of his persone dalyaunce.'[1]
She wist fulle welle that Swete-Spekyng
Comfortith in fulle mych thyng.
Her love she hadde fulle welle assaid,
Of hem she was fulle welle apaied;
To speke of hym hir joye was sette.
Therfore I rede thee that thou gette
A felowe that can welle concele,
And kepe thi counselle, and welle hele,
To whom go shewe hoolly thine herte,
Bothe welle and woo, joye and smerte:
To gete comfort to hym thou goo,
And pryvyly bitwene yow two,
Yee shalle speke of that goodly thyng,
That hath thyne herte in hir kepyng;
Of hir beaute and hir semblaunce,
And of hir goodly countenaunce;

---

[1] The poetess from whom these sentiments are quoted may possibly be Sappho, to whose celebrated ode they bear some resemblance; but it is difficult to trace them with certainty.

Of alle thi state, thou shalt hym seye,
And axe hym counseille how thou may
Do ony thyng that may hir plese,
For it to thee shalle do gret ese,
That he may wite thou trust hym soo,
Bothe of thi wele and of thy woo.
And if his herte to love be sett,
His companye is myche the bett,
For resoun wole he shewe to thee
Alle uttirly his pryvyte,
And what she is he loveth so
To thee pleynly he shal undo,
Withoute drede of ony shame,
Bothe telle hir renoun and hir name.
Thanne shalle he forther ferre and nere,
And namely to thi lady dere,
In syker wise, yee, every other
Shalle helpen as his owne brother,
In trouthe withoute doublenesse,
And kepen cloos in sikernesse.[1]
For it is noble thing in fay,
To have a man thou darst say
Thy pryve counselle every deelle,
For that wole comforte thee right welle,
And thou shalt holde the welle apayed,
Whanne such a freend thou hast assayed.
'The thridde good of gret comforte
That yeveth to lovers most disporte,
Comyth of sight and of biholdyng,
That clepid is Swete-Lokyng,[2]
The which may noon ese do,
Whanne thou art fer thy lady fro;
Wherfore thou prese alwey to be
In place, where thou maist hir se.

---

[1] Sworn brothers were bound to assist one another in love and war. —See vol. i. p. 124, note 1.

[2] Swete-Lokyng is the translation of Doux-Regard.

For it is thyng most amerous,
Most delytable and saverous,
For to aswage a mannes sorowe,
To sene his lady by the morowe.
For it is fulle noble thing
Whanne thyne eyen have metyng,
With that relike[1] precious,
Wherof they be so desirous.
But al day after, soth it is,
They have no drede to faren amysse,
They dreden neither wynde ne reyne,
Ne noon other maner peyne.
For whanne thyne eyen were thus in blisse,
Yit of hir curtesie, ywysse,
Alloone they can not have hir joye,
But to the herte they conveye,
Part of her blisse; to hym thou sende,
Of all this harme to make an ende.
The eye is a good messangere,
Which can to the herte in such manere
Tidyngis sende, that he hath sene
To voide hym of his peynes clene.
Wherof the herte rejoiseth soo
That a grete partye of his woo
Is voided, and putte awey to flight.
Right as the derknesse of the nyght
Is chased with clerenesse of the mone,
Right so is al his woo fulle soone
Devoided clene, whanne that the sight
Biholden may that freshe wight
That the herte desireth soo,
That al his derknesse is agoo;
For thanne the herte is alle at ese,
Whanne they sene that may hem plese.

[1] The original is,

'Le sanctuaire précieux
De qui ils sont si curieux.'

The poet calls the lady a relic, because relics were at that time held the most precious of all things.

'Now have I declared thee alle oute,
Of that thou were in drede and doute;
For I have tolde thee feithfully,
What thee may curen utterly,
And alle lovers that wole be
Feithfulle, and fulle of stabilite.
Good-Hope alwey kepe bi thi side,
And Swete-Thought make eke abide,
Swete-Lokyng and Swete-Speche,
Of alle thyne harmes thei shalle be leche.
Of every thou shalt have gret plesaunce,
If thou canst bide in suffraunce,
And serve wel withoute feyntise,
Thou shalt be quyte of thyne emprise,
With more guerdoun, if that thou lyve;
But all this tyme this I thee yeve.'
The God of Love, whanne al the day,
Had[1] taught me, as ye have herd say,
And enfourmed compendiously,
He vanyshide awey alle sodeynly,
And I alloone lefte alle soole,
So fulle of compleynt and of doole,
For I sawe no man there me by.
My woundes me greved wondirly;
Me for to curen no thyng I knewe,
Save the bothom bright of hewe,
Wheron was sett hooly my thought;
Of other comfort knewe I nought.
But it were thorough the God of Love,
I knewe nat elles to my bihove
That myght me ese or comforte gete,
But if he wolde hym entermete.
The roser was, withoute doute,
Closed with an hegge withoute,
As ye toforne have herd me seyne;
And fast I bisiede, and wolde fayne

[1] The construction appears to be, 'When the God of Love had taught me,' &c.

Have passed the hay, if I myght
Have geten ynne by ony slight
Unto the bothom so faire to see.
But evere I dradde blamed to be,
If men wolde have suspeccioun
That I wolde of entencioun
Have stole the roses that there were;
Therfore to entre I was in fere.
But at the last, as I bithought
Whether I sholde passe or nought,
I sawe come with a glad chere
To me, a lusty bachelere,
Of good stature, and of good hight,
And Bialacoil[1] forsothe he hight.
Sone he was to Curtesie,
And he me graunted fulle gladly,
The passage of the outter hay,
And seide:—'Sir, how that yee may
Passe, if youre wille be,
The fresh roser for to see,
And yee the swete savour fele.
Youre warrans may righte wele,[2]
So thou thee kepe fro folye,
Shalle no man do thee vylanye.
If I may helpe you in ought,
I shalle not feyne, dredeth nought;
For I am bounde to youre servise,
Fully devoide of feyntise.'
Thanne unto Bialacoil saide I,
'I thanke you, sir, full hertly,
And youre biheest take at gre,
That ye so goodly profer me;

---

[1] That is, *Bel-accueil*. It is by means of Bel-accueil, or a graceful address, that the first difficulty in approaching the lady is overcome.

[2] There is something omitted which is necessary to make sense of this passage. We ought perhaps to read:—'Youre warrans I may be righte wele.' This is supported by the original:—'Ge vous i puis bien garantir.'

To you it cometh of gret fraunchise,
That ye me profer youre servise.'
Thanne aftir fulle delyverly,
Thorough the breres anoon wente I,
Wherof encombred was the hay.
I was wel plesed, and soth to say,
To se the bothom faire and swote,
So fresh sprange out of the rote.
And Bialacoil me served welle,
Whanne I so nygh me myght fele
Of the bothom the swete odour,
And so lusty hewed of colour.
But thanne a cherle (foule hym bityde!)
Biside the roses gan him hide,
To kepe the roses of that roser,
Of whom the name was Daunger.
This cherle was hid there in the greves,
Kovered with gras and with leves,
To spie and take whom that he fonde
Unto that roser putte an honde.
He was not soole, for ther was moo;
For with hym were other twoo
Of wikkid maners, and yvell fame.
That oon was clepid by his name,
Wykked-Tonge, God yeve hym sorwe!
For neither at eve ne at morwe,
He can of no man good speke;
On many a just man doth he wreke.
Ther was a womman eke, that hight
Shame, that, who can reken right,
Trespasse was hir fadir name,
Hir moder Resoun; and thus was Shame
Brought of these ilk twoo.
And yit hadde Trespasse never adoo
With Resoun, ne never ley hir bye,
He was so hidous and so oughlye,
I mene this that Trespasse hight;
But Resoun conceyveth, of a sight,

Shame, of that I spake aforne.
And whanne that Shame was thus borne,
It was ordeyned, that Chastite
Shulde of the roser lady be,
Which, of the bothoms more and lasse,
With sondre folk assailed was,
That she ne wist what to doo.
For Venus hir assailith soo,
That nyght and day from hir she stalle
Bothoms and roses over alle.
To Resoun thanne praieth Chastite,
Whom Venus hath flemed over the see,
That she hir doughter wolde hir lene,
To kepe the roser fresh and grene.
Anoon Resoun to Chastite
Is fully assented that it be,
And grauntide hir, at hir request,
That Shame, bycause she is honest,
Shalle keper of the roser be.
And thus to kepe it ther were three,
That noon shulde hardy be ne bolde,
(Were he yong or were he olde)
Ageyne hir wille awey to bere
Bothoms ne roses, that there were.
I hadde wel spedde, hadde I not bene
Awayted with these three, and sene.
For Bialacoil, that was so faire,
So gracious and debonaire,
Quytt hym to me fulle curteislye,
And me to plese bade that I
Shulde drawe to the bothom nere;
Prese in to touche the rosere
Which bare the roses, he yaf me leve;
This graunte ne myght but litel greve.
And for he sawe it liked me,
Ryght nygh the bothom pullede he
A leef alle grene, and yaf me that,
The whiche fulle nygh the bothom sat;

I made of that leef fulle queynte.
And whanne I felte I was aqueynte
With Bialacoil, and so pryve,
I wende alle my wille hadde be,
Thanne waxe I hardy for to telle
To Bialacoil hou me bifelle,
Of Love, that toke and wounded me;
And seide: 'Sir, so mote I thee,
I may no joye have in no wise,
Uppon no side, but it rise;
For sithe (if I shalle not feyne)
In herte I have hadde so grete peyne,
So gret annoy, and such affray,
That I ne wote what I shalle say;
I drede youre wrath to disserve.
Lever me were, that knyves kerve
My body shulde in pecys smalle,
Than in any wise it shulde falle,
That ye wratthed shulde ben with me.'
'Sey boldely thi wille,' quod he,
'I nyl be wroth, if that I may,
For nought that thou shalt to me say.'
Thanne seide I, 'Sir, not you displese,
To knowen of myn gret unese,
In which oonly love hath me brought;
For peynes gret, disese and thought,
Fro day to day he doth me drye;
Supposeth not, sir, that I lye.
In me fyve woundes dide he make,
The soore of whiche shalle nevere slake,
But ye the bothom graunte me,
Which is moost passaunt of beaute,
My lyf, my deth, and my martire,
And tresour that I moost desire.'
Thanne Bialacoil, affrayed alle,
Seyde, 'Sir, it may not falle;
That ye desire it may not arise.
What? wolde ye shende me in this wise?

A mochel foole thanne I were,
If I suffride you awey to bere
The fresh bothom, so faire of sight.
For it were neither skile ne right,
Of the roser ye broke the rynde,
Or take the rose aforn his kynde;
Ye are not courteys to axe it.
Late it stille on the roser sitt,
And late it growe til it amended be,
And perfytly come to beaute.
I nolde not that it pulled were,
Fro the roser that it bere,
To me it is so leef and deere.'
With that sterte oute anoon Daungere,
Out of the place where he was hidde.
His malice in his chere was kidde;
Fulle grete he was and blak of hewe,
Sturdy, and hidous, who so hym knewe,
Like sharp urchouns his here was growe,
His eyes red sparkling as the fire glowe,[1]
His nose frounced fulle kirked stoode,
He come criande as he were woode,
And seide, 'Bialacoil, telle me why
Thou bryngest hider so booldly
Hym that[2] so nygh the roser?
Thou worchist in a wrong maner;
He thenkith to dishonoure thee,
Thou art wel worthy to have maugree,[3]
To late hym of the roser wite;
Who serveth a feloun is yvel quitte.
Thou woldist have doon gret bounte,
And he with shame wolde quyte thee.
Fle hennes, felowe! I rede thee goo!
It wanteth litel I wole thee sloo;

[1] This line is omitted in the MS. It is here supplied from Speght.
[2] This line appears to be corrupt. The pronoun *that* has no verb to agree with it. Perhaps we ought to read *than*.
[3] *Maugre*, or malgre, is here a substantive, and means disfavour.

For Bialacoil ne knewe thee nought,
Whanne thee to serve he sette his thought;
For thou wolt shame hym if thou myght,
Bothe ageyns resoun and right.
I wole no more in thee affye,
That comest so slyghtly for tespye;
For it preveth wonder welle,
Thy slight and tresoun every deelle.'
I durst no more there make abode,
For the cherl he was so wode;
So gan he threte and manace,
And thurgh the haye he dide me chace.
For feer of hym I tremblyde and quoke,
So cherlishly his heed he shoke;
And seide, if eft he myght me take,
I shulde not from his hondis scape.
Thanne Bialacoil is fledde and mate,
And I alle soole disconsolate,
Was left aloone in peyne and thought,
Fro shame to deth I was nygh brought.
Thanne thought I on myn high foly,
How that my bodie, utterly,
Was yeve to peyne and to martire;
And therto hadde I so gret ire,
That I ne durst the hayes passe;
There was noon hope, there was no grace.
I trowe nevere man wiste of peyne,
But he were laced in Loves cheyne;
Ne no man, and sooth it is,
But if he love, what anger is.
Love holdith his heest to me right wele,
Whanne peyne he seid I shulde fele.
Noon herte may thenke, ne tunge seyne,
A quarter of my woo and peyne.
I myght not with the anger laste;
Myn herte in poynt was for to braste,
Whanne I thought on the rose, that soo
Was thurgh Daunger cast me froo.

A longe while stode I in that state,
Til that me saugh so madde and mate
The lady of the high warde,
Which from hir tour lokide thiderward.
Resoun men clepe that lady,
Which from hir tour delyverly,
Come doun to me without more.
But she was neither yong, ne hoore,
Ne high ne lowe, ne fatt ne lene,
But best, as it were in a mene.[1]
Hir eyen twoo were cleer and light
As ony candelle that brenneth bright;
And on hir heed she hadde a crowne.
Hir semede wel an high persoune;
For rounde enviroun hir crownet
Was fulle of riche stonys frett.
Hir goodly semblaunt, by devys,
I trowe were maad in Paradys;
For nature hadde nevere such a grace,
To forge a werk of such compace.
For certeyn, but if the letter lye,
God hym silf, that is so high,
Made hir aftir his ymage,
And yaff hir sith sich avauntage,
That she hath myght and seignurie
To kepe men from alle folye;
Who so wole trowe hir lore,
Ne may offenden nevermore.[2]
And while I stode thus derk and pale,
Resoun bigan to me hir tale,
She seide: 'Alhayle, my swete freende!
Foly and childhoode wole thee sheende,
Which thee have putt in gret affray;
Thou hast bought deere the tyme of May,

[1] This description of Reason appears to be formed on the ancient philosophical maxim, Ne quid nimis.

[2] This passage seems to be an allusion to Prov. viii.

That made thyn herte mery to be.
In yvelle tyme thou wentist to see
The gardyne, wherof Ydilnesse
Bare the keye, and was maistresse
Whanne thou yedest in the daunce
With hir, and hadde aqueyntaunce:
Hir aqueyntaunce is perilous,
First softe, and aftir noious;
She hath thee trasshed, withoute wene;
The God of Love hadde the not sene,
Ne hadde Ydilnesse thee conveyed
In the verger where Myrthe hym pleyed.[1]
If Foly have supprised thee,
Do so that it recovered be;
And be wel ware to take nomore
Counsel, that greveth aftir sore;
He is wise that wole hymsilf chastise.
And though a yong man in ony wise
Trespace amonge, and do foly,
Late hym not tarye, but hastily
Late hym amende what so be mys.
And eke I counseile thee, iwys,
The god of love hoolly foryete,
That hath thee in sich peyne sette,
And thee in herte tormented soo.
I can not sene how thow maist goo
Other weyes thee[2] to garisoun;
For Daunger, that is so feloun,
Felly purposith thee to werye,
Which is ful cruel the soth to seye.
'And yitt of Daunger cometh no blame,
In rewarde[3] of my doughter Shame,

[1] That is, 'The God of Love would not have seen thee, had not Idleness conveyed thee into the *verger*, or orchard, where Mirth was playing.'

[2] This word, omitted in the MS., is supplied from Speght.

[3] *Reward* and regard were originally the same words, *w* and *g* being convertible. Reason says that of Danger comes no blame in comparison of that which comes of Shame.

Which hath the roses in hir warde,
As she that may be no musarde.
And Wikked-Tunge is with these two,
That suffrith no man thider goo;
For er a thing be do he shalle,
Where that he cometh, over alle,
In fourty places, if it be sought,
Seye thyng that nevere was don ne wrought;
So moche tresoun is in his male,
Of falsnesse for to feyne[1] a tale.
Thou delest with angry folk, ywis;
Wherfor to thee bettir is,
From these folk awey to fare,
For they wole make thee lyve in care.
This is the yvelle that love they calle,
Wherynne ther is but foly alle,
For love is foly everydelle;
Who loveth, in no wise may do welle,
Ne sett his thought on no good werk.
His scole he lesith, if he be a clerk;
Or other craft eke, if he be,
He shal not thryve therynne; for he
In love shal have more passioun,[2]
Than monke, hermyte, or chanoun.
This peyne is hard out of mesure,
The joye may eke no while endure;
And in the possessioun,
Is mych tribulacion;
The joye is so short lastyng,
And but in happe is the getyng;
For I see there many in travaille,
That atte laste foule fayle.
I was no thyng thy counseler,
Whanne thou were maad the homager

---

[1] The MS. reads *seyne*, which is probably a mistake. *Feyne* is Speght's reading.

[2] *Passion* here seems to mean *suffering*.

Of God of Love to hastily;
Ther was no wisdom but foly.
Thyne herte was joly, but not sage,
Whanne thou were brought in sich a rage,
To yelde thee so readily,
And to Love of his gret maistrie.
'I rede thee Love awey to dryve,
That makith thee recche not of thi lyve.
The foly more fro day to day
Shal growe, but thou it putte away.
Take with thy teeth the bridel faste,[1]
To daunte thyne herte; and eke thee caste,
If that thou maist, to gete thee defence
For to redresse thi first offence.
Who so his herte alwey wole leve,
Shal fynde amonge that shal hym greve.'
Whanne I hir herd thus me chastise,
I answerd in ful angry wise.
I prayed hir cessen of hire speche,
Outher to chastise me or teche,
To bidde me my thought refreyne,
Which Love hath caught in his demeyne:—
'What? wene ye love wole consente,
That me assailith with bowe bente,
To drawe myne herte out of his honde,
Which is so qwikly in his bonde?
That ye counsele, may nevere be;
For whanne he firste arestide me,
He took myne herte so hoole hym tille,
That it is no thyng at my wille;
He tought[2] it so hym for to obey,
That he it sparrede with a key.
I pray yow late me be alle stille,
For ye may welle, if that ye wille,

[1] A metaphor from the habit which runaway horses have, of taking the bit in their teeth.

[2] The MS. reads *thought*, Speght *tought*, as in the text. The latter is probably a form of the past tense, as from werche, wrought, seche, sought, teche, tought.

Youre wordis waste in idilnesse;
For utterly withouten gesse,
Alle that ye seyn is but in veyne.
Me were lever dye in the peyne,[1]
Than Love to me-ward shulde arette
Falsheed, or tresoun on me sette.
I wole me gete prys or blame,
And love trewe to save my name;
Who that me chastisith, I hym hate.'
With that word Resoun wente hir gate,
Whanne she saugh for no sermonynge
She myght me fro my foly bryng.
Thanne dismaied, I, lefte alle sool,
Forwery, forwandred as a fool,
For I ne knewe no cherisaunce,
Thanne felle into my remembraunce,
How Love bade me to purveye
A felowe, to whom I myght seye
My counselle and my pryvete,
For that shulde moche availe me.
With that bithought I me, that I
Hadde a felowe fast by,
Trewe and siker, curteys, and hende,
And he was called by name a freende;
A trewer felowe was no wher noon.
In haste to hym I wente anoon,
And to hym alle my woo I tolde,
Fro hym right nought I wold witholde.
I tolde hym alle withoute were,
And made my compleynt on Daungere.
How for to see he was hidous,
And to me ward contrarious;
The which thurgh his cruelte,
Was in poynt to have meygned[2] me;
With Bialacoil whanne he me sey
Withynne the gardeyn walke and pley,

[1] See vol. v. p. 41, note 2.
[2] Speght reads *meimed*, maimed or wounded.

Fro me he had hym for to goo,
And I bilefte aloone in woo;
I durst no lenger with hym speke,
For Daunger seid he wolde be wreke,
Whanne that he sawe how I wente,
The fresh bothom for to hente,
If I were hardy to come neer,
Bitwene the hay and the roser.
This freend whanne he wiste of my thought,
He discomforted me right nought,
But seide, 'Felowe, be not so madde,
Ne so abaysshed nor bystadde.
My silf I knowe fulle welle Daungere,
And how he is feers of his cheere,
At prime temps, Love to manace;
Ful ofte I have ben in his caas.
A feloun firste though that he be,
Aftir thou shalt hym souple se.
Of longe passed I knewe hym welle;
Ungoodly first though men hym feele,
He wole make[1] aftir in his beryng
Been, for service and obeyssyhng.
I shal thee telle what thou shalt doo:—
Mekely I rede thou go hym to,
Of herte pray hym specialy
Of thy trespace to have mercy,
And hote hym welle, here to plese,
That thou shalt nevermore hym displese.
Who can best serve of flaterie,
Shalle plese Daunger most uttirly.'
My freend hath seid to me so wel,
That he me esid hath somdelle,
And eke allegged of my torment;
For thurgh hym had I hardement
Agayn to Daunger for to go,
To preve if I myght meke hym soo.

[1] The construction is:—'He will afterwards be meek [make] in his bearing.'

To Daunger came I alle ashamed,
The which aforn me hadde blamed,
Desiryng for to pese my woo;
But over hegge durst I not goo,
For he forbede me the passage.
I fonde hym cruel in his rage,
And in his honde a gret burdoun.
To hym I knelide lowe adoun,
Ful meke of port, and symple of chere,
And seide, 'Sir, I am comen heere
Oonly to aske of you mercy.
It greveth me fulle gretly
That evere my lyf I wratthed you,
But for to amenden I am come now;
With alle my myght, bothe loude and stille,
To doon right at youre owne wille;
For Love made me for to doo
That I have trespassed hidirto;
Fro whom I ne may withdrawe myne herte;
Yit shalle I never, for joy ne smerte,
What so bifalle good or ille,
Offende more ageyn youre wille.
Lever I have endure disese,
Than do that you shulde displese.
I you require, and pray that ye
Of me have mercy and pitee,
To stynte your ire that greveth soo,
That I wole swere for evermo
To be redressid at youre likyng,
If I trespasse in ony thyng;
Save that, I pray thee, graunte me
A thyng that may nat warned be;
That I may love alle oonly,
Noon other thyng of you aske I.
I shalle doon, iwys,[1]
If of youre grace ye graunte me this.

[1] The original 'Toutes vos autres volontés Feral,' leads us to suppose that we ought to read:—'I shal doon al your wil, iwys.'

And ye may not letten me,
For wel wot ye that love is free,
And I shalle loven sichen that I wille,
Who evere like it welle or ille;
And yit ne wold I for alle Fraunce
Doe thyng to do you displesaunce.'
Thanne Daunger fille in his entent
For to foryeve his maletalent;
But alle his wratthe yit at laste
He hath relesed, I preyde so faste:
'Shortly,' he seide, 'thy request
Is not too mochel dishonest;
Ne I wole not werne it thee,
For yit no thyng engreveth mee.
For though thou love thus evermore,
To me is neither softe ne sore.
Love where that thee list; what recchith me,
So thou[1] fer fro my roses be?
Trust not on me for noon assay,
In ony tyme to passe the hay.'
Thus hath he graunted my praiere.
Thanne wente I forth withouten were
Unto my freend, and tolde hym alle,
Which was right joyfulle of my talle.
He seide, 'Now goth wel thyn affere,
He shalle to thee be debonaire.
Though he aforn was dispitous,
He shalle heereaftir be gracious.
If he were touchid on somme good veyne,[2]
He shuld yit rewen on thi peyne.

---

[1] *Thou* is omitted in the MS. and in Speght; it is here supplied from conjecture, as necessary to the sense, and supported by the original:—

—— 'mes que tu soies
Loing de mes roses toutesvoies.

[2] This is a literal translation from the original:—

'S'il iere pris en bonne veine.'

It appears to be a metaphor taken from surgery.

Suffre, I rede, and no boost make,
Tille thou at goodnes[1] maist hym take.
By suffraunce, and by wordis softe,
A man may overcome ofte
Hym that aforn he hadde in drede,
In bookis sothly as I rede.'
Thus hath my freend with gret comfort
Avaunced me with high disport,
Which wolde me good as mych as I.
And thanne anoon fulle sodeynly
I toke my leve, and streight I wente
Unto the hay; for gret talent
I hadde to sene the fresh bothom,
Wherynne lay my salvacioun;
And Daunger toke kepe, if that I
Kepe hym covenaunt trewly.
So sore I dradde his manasyng,
I durst not breke his biddyng;
For lest that I were of hym shent,
I brake not his comaundement,
For to purchase his good wille.
It was for to come ther tille,[2]
His mercy was to ferre bihynde;
I wepte, for I ne myght it fynde.
I compleyned and sighed sore,
And langwisshed evermore,
For I durst not over goo,
Unto the rose I loved soo,

---

[1] The MS. reads *good mes*, a mere clerical error. *Goodnes* is taken from Speght, and is supported by the original:—

'Or devés soffrir et atendre
Tant qu'en *bon point* le puissiés prendre.'

[2] This passage appears to be corrupt. The original is—

'Mes ce me torne à grant contraire
Que sa merci trop me demore.'

The true reading is probably—

It was *fer* to come thertille.

O and *e* are scarcely distinguishable in MSS.

Thurghout my demyng outerly,
That he had knowlege certeynly,
Thanne[1] Love me ladde in sich a wise,
That in me ther was no feyntise,
Falsheed, ne no trecherie.
And yit he, fulle of vylanye,
Of disdeyne, and cruelte,
On me ne wolde have pite,
His cruel wille for to refreyne,
Tho I wepe alwey, and me compleyne.
And while I was in this torment,
Were come of grace, by God sent,
Fraunchise, and with hir Pite,
Fulfild the bothom of bounte.[2]
They go to Daunger anoon right
To forther me with alle her myght,
And helpe in worde and in dede,
For welle they saugh that it was nede.
First of hir grace dame Fraunchise
Hath taken of this emprise:
She seide, 'Daunger, gret wrong ye do
To worche this man so mych woo,
Or pynen hym so angerly,
It is to you gret villanye.
I can not see why ne how
That he hath trespassed ageyn you,
Save that he loveth; wherfore ye shulde
The more in cherete of hym holde.
The force of love makith hym do this;
Who wolde hym blame he dide amys?

---

[1] *Thanne* appears to be a mistake for *that*. The original is—

'Tant fis qu'il a certainement
Veu à mon contentement,
Qu' Amor malement me justise,
Et qu'il n'i a point de faintise
En moi, ni de desloiauté.'

[2] This line is obscure, and probably corrupt. The original throws no light upon it:—

'N'i ot oncques plus respitié.'

He lefeth more than ye may do;
His peyne is harde, ye may see, lo!
And Love in no wise wolde consente
That he[1] have power to repente;
For though that quyk ye wolde hym sloo,
Fro Love his herte may not goo.
Now, swete sir, is it[2] youre ese
Hym for to angre or disese?
Allas, what may it you avaunce
To done to hym so gret grevaunce?
What worship is it agayn hym take,
Or on youre man a werre make,[3]
Sith he so lowly every wise
Is redy, as ye lust devise?
If Love hath caught hym in his lace,
You for to beye in every caas,
And ben youre suget at your wille,
Shulde ye therfore willen hym ille?
Ye shulde hym spare more alle oute,
Than hym that is bothe proude and stoute.
Curtesie wole that ye socour
Hem that ben meke undir youre cure.
His herte is hard that wole not meke,
Whanne men of mekenesse hym biseke.'
'That is certeyn,' seide Pite;
'We se ofte that humilite,
Bothe ire, and also felonye
Venquyssheth, and also melencolye;

---

[1] The MS. reads *ye*; but *he* is necessary for the sense, and is supported by the original:—

'Plus i pert-il que vous ne faites,
Qu'il en a maintes poines traites;
Més Amor ne veut consentir
Que *il* s'en puisse repentir.'

[2] The MS. reads *it is*; but *is it* is evidently the true reading. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the original answering to this couplet, to serve as a guide.

[3] That is, 'What honour is it to you to take part against him, or to make war on your own vassal?'

To stonde forth in such duresse
Is[1] cruelte and wikkednesse.
Wherfore I pray you, sir Daungere,
For to mayntene no lenger heere
Such cruel werre agayn youre man,
As hooly youres as ever he[2] can;
Nor that ye worchen no more woo
Upon this caytif that langwisshith soo,
Which wole no more to you trespasse,
But putte hym hoolly in youre grace.
His offense ne was but lite;
The God of Love it was to wite,[3]
That he youre thralle so gretly is,
And if ye harme hym, ye done amys;
For he hath hadde fulle hard pennaunce,
Sith that ye refte hym thaqueyntaunce
Of Bialacoil, his most joye,
Which alle hise peynes myght acoye.
He was biforn anoyed sore,
But thanne ye doubled hym welle more;
For he of blis hath ben fulle bare,
Sith Bialacoil was fro hym fare.
Love hath to hym gret distresse,
He hath no nede of more duresse.
Voideth from hym your ire, I rede;
Ye may not wynnen in this dede.
Makith Bialacoil repeire ageyn,
And haveth pite upon his peyne;
For Fraunchise wole, and I Pite,
That mercyful to hym ye be;
And sith that she and I accorde,
Have upon hym misericorde;

---

[1] The MS. reads *this*, which is nonsense. *Is* is required by the context, and is supported by the original:—

'Et quand trop dure l'engrestié,
C'est felonnie et mavestié.'

[2] The MS. reads *ye*, which is evidently a mere clerical error.

[3] That is, 'It was proper to blame the God of Love for it.'

For I you pray, and eke moneste,
Nought to refusen oure requeste;
For he is hard and felle of thought,
That for us twoo wole do right nought.'
Daunger ne myght no more endure,
He mekede hym unto mesure.
'I wole in no wise,' seith Daungere,
'Denye that ye have asked heere;
It were to gret uncurtesie.
I wole ye have the companye
Of Bialacoil, as ye devise;
I wole hym lette in no wise.'
To Bialacoil thanne wente in high
Fraunchise, and seide fulle curteislye:—
'Ye have to longe be deignous
Unto this lover, and daungerous,[1]
Fro him to withdrawe your presence,
Which hath do to him grete offence,
That ye not wolde upon him see;
Wherfore a sorweful man is he.
Shape ye to paye him, and to plese,
Of my love if ye wolle have ese.
Fulfille his wille, sith that ye knowe
Daunger is daunted and broughte lowe
Thurgh help of me and of Pite;
You dare no more aferde be.'
'I shalle do right as ye wille,'
Saith Bialacoil, 'for it is skille,
Sith Daunger wol that it so be.'
Than Fraunchise hath hym sente to me.
Bialacoil at the bigynnyng
Salued me in his comyng.
No straungenesse was in him sene,
No more than he hadde wrathed bene.
As faire semblaunt thanne shewed he me,
And goodly, as aforn didde he;

[1] Here two leaves of the MS. are lost, and the text is taken from Speght.

And by the honde, without doute,
Withynne the hay right alle aboute,
He ladde me, with right good chere,
Alle enviroun the vergere,
That Daunger had me chased fro.
Now have I leve over alle to goo;
Now am I raised, at my devys,
Fro helle unto paradys.
Thus Bialacoil of gentilnesse
With alle his peyne and besinesse,
Hath shewed me oonly of grace
The estres of the swote place.
I saw the rose whanne I was nigh,
Was greater woxen, and more high,
Fressh, rody, and faire of hewe,
Of colour ever ilyche newe.
And whanne I hadde it longe sene,
I saugh that thurgh the leves grene
The rose spredde to spannishyng;[1]
To sene it was a goodly thyng.
But it ne was so sprede on brede,
That men withynne myght knowe the sede;
For it coverte was and close
Bothe with the leves and with the rose.
The stalk was evene and grene upright,
It was theron a goodly sight;
And wel the bettre, without wene,
For the sede was not sene.
Ful faire it spradde, the god of blesse,[2]
For sych another, as I gesse,
Aforn ne was, ne more vermeyle.
I was abawed for merveile,
For evere the fairer that it was,
The more I am bounden in Loves laas.

---

[1] This is a word of French origin, being derived from *espanissant*, expanding; the modern English word goes back to the original Latin, *expando*.

[2] Perhaps we ought to read, 'May God it blesse.' The original is 'Dieu la benéie.'

Longe I abode there, soth to seye,
Til Bialacoil I gan to preye,
Whanne that I saugh hym in no wise
To me wernen his servise,
That he me wolde graunte a thyng,
Which to remembre is wel fyttyng;
This is to seyn, that of his grace
He wolde me yeve leisure and space
To me that was so desirous
To have a kissyng precious
Of the goodly fresh rose,
That so swetely smellith in my nose;
'For if it you displesed nought,
I wole gladly, as I have sought,
Have a kis therof freely
Of youre yeft; for certeynely
I wole none have but by your leve,
So loth me were you for to greve.'
He seide, 'Freend, so God me spede,
Of Chastite I have sich drede,
Thou sholdest not werned be for me,
But I dare not for Chastite.
Ageyn hir dare I not mysdo,
For alwey biddith she me soo
To yeve no lover leve to kisse;
For who therto may wynnen, ywysse,
He of the surplus of the prey
May lyve in hope to gette som day.
For who so kissyng may atteyne,
Of loves peyne hath, soth to seyne,
The beste and moste avenaunt,
And ernest of the remenaunt.'
Of his answere I sighed sore;
I durst assaye hym tho no more,
I hadde sich drede to greve hym ay.
A man shulde not to moche assaye
To chafe his freend out of mesure,
Nor put his lyf in aventure;

For no man at the firste stroke
Ne may not felle doun an oke;
Nor of the reisins have the wyne,
Til grapes be[1] ripe and welle afyne,
Be sore empressid, I you ensure,
And drawen out of the pressure.
But I forpeyned wonder stronge,
Though that I aboode right longe
Aftir the kis, in peyne and woo,
Sith I to kis desired soo:
Tille that, rewyng on my distresse,
Ther come Venus the goddesse,
Which ay werieth Chastite,
Came of hir grace to soccoure me,
Whos myght is knowe ferre and wide,
For she is modir of Cupide,
The God of Love, blynde as stoon,
That helpith lovers many oon.
This lady brought in hir right honde
Of brennyng fyre a blasyng bronde;
Wherof the flawme and hoote fire
Hath many a lady in desire
Of love brought, and sore hette,
And in hir servise her herte ysette.[2]
This lady was of good entaile,[3]
Right wondirfulle of apparayle;

[1] *Be* is here redundant, and spoils the sense. The original is—

'Vous savés bien qu'au premier cop
Ne cope-l'en mie le chesne;
Ne l'en n'a pas le vin de l'esne,
Tant que li pressoirs sont estrois.'

The meaning of the passage is, 'We cannot have the wine until the grapes be ripe, and finally (afyne) well and sore pressed, and drawn out of the pressure.' To this pressure of the grapes is compared the tribulation of the lover. At this line the MS. resumes.

[2] The MS. reads *is sette*, which is evidently a mistake for *ysette*. The original is—

'Ele tint un brandon flammant
En sa main destre, dont la flame
A eschauffé mainte dame.'

[3] D'une belle taille, of a fine figure.

By hir attyre so bright and shene,
Men myght perceyve welle, and sene,
She was not of religioun.[1]
Nor I nelle make mencioun
Nor of robe, nor of tresour,
Of broche, neithir of hir riche attour;[2]
Ne of hir girdille aboute hir side,
For that I nylle not long abide.
But knowith wel, that certeynly
She was araied richely.
Devoyde of pruyde certeyn she was;
To Bialacoil she wente apas,
And to hym shortly in a clause
She seide: 'Sir, what is the cause
Ye ben of port so daungerous
Unto this lover, and deynous,
To graunte hym no thyng but a kisse?
To worne it hym ye done amysse,
Sith welle ye wote, how that he
Is Loves servaunt, as ye may see,
And hath beaute, wherthrough he is
Worthy of love to have the blis.
How he is semely biholde and see,
How he is faire, how he is free,
How he is swoote and debonaire,
Of age yonge, lusty, and faire.
There is no lady so hawteyne,
Duchesse, countesse, ne chasteleyne,
That I nolde holde hir ungoodly,
For to refuse hym outterly.
His breth is also good and swete,
And eke his lippis rody, and mete
Oonly to pleyne, and to kisse.
Graunte hym a kis, of gentilnysse!
His teth arn also white and clene;
Me thenkith wrong withouten wene,

[1] That is, 'That she did not belong to a religious order.'
[2] The original is *ator*, which M. Méon explains *parures*, attire.

If ye now worne hym, trustith me,
To graunte that a kis have he.
The lasse ye helpe hym that ye haste,
And the more tyme shul ye waste.'[1]
Whanne the flawme of the verry bronde
That Venus brought in hir right honde,
Hadde Bialacoil with hete smete,
Anoon he badde me, withouten lette,
Grauntede to me the rose kisse.
Thanne of my peyne I gan to lysse,
And to the rose anoon wente I,
And kisside it fulle feithfully.
Thar no man aske if I was blithe;[2]
Whanne the savour soft and lythe
Stroke to myn herte withoute more,
And me alegged of my sore,
So was I fulle of joye and blisse.
It is faire sich a flour to kisse,
It was so swoote and saverous.
I myght not be so angwisshous,
That I mote glad and joly be,
Whanne that I remembre me.
Yit ever among, sothly to seyne,
I suffre noye and moche peyne.
The see may never be so stille,
That with a litel wynde it wille
Overwhelme and turne also,
As it were woode, in wawis goo.
Aftir the calme the trouble soune
Mote folowe, and chaunge as the moone.

---

[1] As the couplet stands, it is unintelligible. Perhaps we ought to read—

'The lasse to helpe hym that ye haste
The more tyme shul ye waste.'

This conjecture is supported by the original:—

'Car tant eum vous plus atendrez
Tant plus sachés de tens perdrez.'

[2] That is, 'No man need [thar] ask,' &c.

Right so farith Love, that selde[1] in oon
Holdith his anker; for right anoon
Whanne they in ese wene beste to lyve,
They ben with tempest alle fordryve.
Who serveth Love, can telle of woo,
The stoundemele joie mote overgoo.
Now he hurteth, and now he cureth,
For selde[2] in oo poynt Love endureth.
Now is it right me to procede,
How Shame gan medle and take hede,
Thurgh whom felle angres I have hadde;
And how the strong walle was maad,
And the castelle of brede and lengthe,
That God of Love wanne with his strengthe.
Alle this in romance[3] wille I sette,
And for no thyng ne wille I lette,
So that it lykyng to hir be,
That is the flour of beaute;
For she may best my labour quyte,
That I for hir love shal endite.
Wikkid-Tunge,[4] that the covyne
Of every lover can devyne
Worste, and addith more somdelle,
For Wikkid-Tunge seith never welle,
To me ward bare he right gret hate,
Espiyng me erly and late,
Tille he hath sene the gret chere
Of Bialacoil and me ifere.

---

[1] The MS. reads *yelde*, which is evidently a mistake for *selde*, Speght's reading.

[2] This passage appears to be imitated in *The Knightes Tale*.—See vol. i. p. 137.

[3] *Romance* in the original is *l'estoire*. *Romance* originally denoted the language in which the work was written; and as the earliest compositions in the corrupt Roman, or French, were metrical histories, it was at first appropriated to them; until at length, when these histories were exchanged for works of extravagant fiction, it came to be applied exclusively to this species of composition.—See vol. v. p. 58, note 3.

[4] In the original *Wikkid-Tunge* is *Male-Bouche*.

He myght not his tunge withstonde
Worse to report than he fonde,
He was so fulle of cursed rage;
It satte hym welle of his lynage,
For hym an irish[1] womman bare.
His tunge was fyled sharpe, and square,
Poignaunt and right kervyng,
And wonder bitter in spekyng.
For whanne that he me gan espie,
He swoore, affermyng sikirlye,
Bitwene Bialacoil and me
Was yvel aquayntaunce and prive.
He spak therof so folilye,
That he awakide Jelousye;
Which alle afrayed in his risyng,
Whanne that he herd janglyng,
He ran anoon as he were woode
To Bialacoil there that he stode;
Which hadde lever in this caas
Have ben at Reynes or Amyas;[2]
For foot-hoot in his felonye,
To hym thus seide Jelousie:—
'Why hast thou ben so necligent,
To kepen, whanne I was absent,
This verger heere left in thi warde?
To me thou haddist no rewarde,
To truste (to thy confusioun)
Hym this, to whom suspeccioun
I have right gret, for it is nede;
It is welle shewed by the dede.
Grete faute in thee now have I founde;
By God, anoon thou shalt be bounde,

[1] *Irish* does not here denote the lady's nation, but her disposition, as being given to *ire*. The original is—

'Qu'il fu filz d'une vielle *irese*.'

[2] In the original *Estampes* and *Meaux* are the places specified:—

'Ele court comme desvée
Vers Bel-Acueil, qui vosist miaus
Estre à Estampes, ou à Miaus.'

And fast loken in a tour,
Withoute refuyt or socour.
For Shame to longe hath be thee froo;
Over soone she was agoo.
Whanne thou hast lost bothe drede and feere,
It semed wel she was not heere.
She was bisy in no wyse,
To kepe thee and chastise,
And for to helpen Chastite
To kepe the roser, as thenkith me.
For thanne this boy knave so boldely,
Ne sholde not have be hardy
In this verge hadde such game,
Which now me turneth to gret shame.'
Bialacoil nyst what to sey;
Fulle fayn he wolde have fled awey,
For feere han hidde, nere that he
Alle sodeynly toke[1] hym with me.
And whanne I saugh he hadde soo,
This Jelousie take us twoo,
I was astoned, and knewe no rede,
But fledde awey for verrey drede.
Thanne Shame cam forth fulle symply;
She wente have trespaced fulle gretly;
Humble of hir port, and made it symple,
Weryng a vayle in stide of wymple,
As nonnys don in her abbey.
Bycause hir herte was in affray,
She gan to speke withynne a throwe
To Jelousie, right wonder lowe.
First of his grace she bysoughte,
And seide:—'Sire, ne leveth noughte
Wikkid-Tunge, that fals espie,
Which is so glad to feyne and lye.
He hath you maad, thurgh flateryng,
On Bialacoil a fals lesyng.

[1] *Toke* here means *detected*.

His falsnesse is not now anewe,
It is to long that he hym knewe.
This is not the first day;
For Wikkid-Tunge hath custome ay,
Yonge folkis to bewreye,
And fals lesynges on hem lye.
Yit nevertheles I see amonge,
That the loigne[1] it is so longe
Of Bialacoil, hertis to lure,
In Loves servyse for to endure,
Drawyng such folk hym too,
That he had no thyng with to doo;
But in sothnesse I trowe nought,
That Bialacoil hadde ever in thought
To do trespace or vylonye;
But for[2] his modir Curtesie
Hath taught hym ever to be
Good of aqueyntaunce and pryve,
For he loveth noon hevynesse,
But mirthe and pley, and alle gladnesse;
He hateth alle trechours,[3]
Soleyn folk and envyous;
For ye witen how that he
Wole ever glad and joyfulle be
Honestly with folk to pleye.
I have be negligent in good feye
To chastise him; therfore now I
Of herte crye you heere mercy,
That I have been so recheles
To tamen hym, withouten lees.
Of my foly I me repente;
Now wole I hoole sette myn entente

---

1 Speght reads *soigne*, which is nonsense. *Loigne* means, literally, line, or tether; metaphorically, liberty. The original is—

'Sans faille ce n'est pas mençonge,
Bel-Acueil a trop longue *longe*.'

2 *For* here means 'because.'

3 *Trecherous* is probably the true reading.

To kepe bothe lowe and stille,
Bialacoil to do youre wille.'
'Shame, Shame,' seyde Jelousie,
'To be bytrasshed gret drede have I.
Leccherie hath clombe so hye,
That almoost blered is myn yhe;
No wonder is, if that drede have I.
Over alle regnyth Lecchery,
Whos myght growith nyght and day.
Bothe in cloistre and in abbey,
Chastite is werried over alle.[1]
Therfore I wole with siker walle
Close bothe roses and roser.
I have to longe in this maner
Left hem unclosid wilfully;
Wherfore I am right inwardly
Sorowfulle and repente me.
But now they shalle no lenger be
Unclosid; and yit I drede sore,
I shalle repente ferthermore,
For the game goth alle amys.
Counselle I must newe, ywys.
I have to longe tristed thee,
But now it shal no lenger be;
For he may best, in every cost,
Disceyve that men tristen most.
I see wel that I am nygh shent,
But if I sette my fulle entent
Remedye to purveye.
Therfore close I shalle the weye,
From hem that wole the rose espye,
And come to wayte me vilonye,[2]

[1] This is one of the reflections on the state of ecclesiastical institutions which accounts for the hostility of the clergy to this poem.

[2] That is, 'From those who come to lie in wait to do me a shame.' The original is—

'Certes ge lor clorrai la voie
A ceux qui, por moi *conchier*,
Viennent mes roses espier.'

For, in good feith and in trouthe,
I wole not lette for no slouthe,
To lyve the more in sikirnesse,
Do make anoon a fortresse,[1]
Thanne close the roses of good savour.
In myddis shalle I make a tour
To putte Bialacoil in prisoun,
For evere I drede me of tresoun.
I trowe I shal hym kepe so,
That he shal have no myght to goo
Aboute to make companye
To hem that thenke of vylanye;
Ne to no such as hath ben heere
Aforn, and founde in hym good chere,
Which han assailed hym to shende,
And with her trowandyse to blynde.
A foole is eyth to bigyle,
But may I lyve a litel while,
He shal forthenke his fair semblaunt.'
And with that word came Drede avaunt,
Which was abasshed, and in gret fere,
Whanne he wiste Jelousie was there.
He was for drede in such affray,
That not a word durst he say,
But quakyng stode fulle stille aloone,
Til Jelousie his weye was gone,
Save[2] Shame, that him not forsoke;
Bothe Drede and she ful sore quoke.
That at last Drede abreyde,
And to his cosyn Shame seyde:
'Shame,' he seide, 'in sothfastnesse,
To me it is gret hevynesse,
That the noyse so ferre is go,
And the sclaundre of us twoo.

[1] The construction is, 'In order to live in greater security, I will not, for any sloth, delay [lete] to cause a fortress to be made.' The next line appears to be corrupt.

[2] *Save* refers to *alone* in the line next but one before.

But sith that it is byfalle,
We may it not ageyn calle,
Whanne onys sprongen is a fame.
For many a yeer withouten blame
We han ben, and many a day,
For many an Aprille and many a May
We han passed, not ashamed,
Tille Jelousie hath us blamed
Of mystrust and suspecioun
Causeles, withoute enchesoun,
Go we to Daunger hastily,
And late us shewe hym openly,
That he hath not aright wrought,
Whanne that he sette nought his thought
To kepe better the purprise;
In his doyng he is not wise.
He hath to us do gret wronge,
That hath suffred now so longe
Bialacoil to have his wille,
Alle his lustes to fulfille.
He must amende it utterly,
Or ellys shalle he vilaynesly
Exiled be out of this londe;
For he the werre may not withstonde
Of Jelousie, nor the greef,
Sith Bialacoil is at myscheef.'
To Daunger, Shame, and Drede anoon
The right weye ben goon.
The cherle[1] thei founden hem aforn
Liggyng undir an hawethorn.
Undir his heed no pilowe was,
But in the stede a trusse of gras.
He slombred, and a nappe he toke,
Tylle Shame pitously hym shoke,
And grete manace on hym gan make.
'Why slepist thou whanne thou shulde wake?'

---

[1] The original is *le paisan*.

Quod Shame; 'thou doist us vylanye!
Who tristith thee, he doth folye,
To kepe roses or bothoms,
Whanne thei ben faire in her sesouns.
Thou art woxe to familiere
Where thou shulde be straunge of chere,
Stoute of thi porte, redy to greve.
Thou doist gret folye for to leve
Bialacoil hereinne to calle
The yonder man to shenden us alle.
Though that thou slepe, we may here
Of Jelousie gret noyse heer.
Art thou now late? rise up an high,
And stoppe sone and delyverly
Alle the gappis of the hay;
Do no favour I thee pray.
It fallith no thyng to thy name,
To make faire semblaunt, where thou maist blame.
'If Bialacoil be sweete and free,
Dogged and felle thou shuldist be;
Froward and outerageous, ywis;
A cherl chaungeth that curteis is.
This have I herd ofte in seiyng,
That man may for no dauntyng
Make a sperhauke of a bosarde.[1]
Alle men wole holde thee for musarde,
That debonair have founden thee,
It sittith thee nought curteis to be;
To do men plesaunce or servise,
In thee it is recreaundise.
Lete thi werkis fer and nere
Be like thi name, which is Daungere.'

---

1 The proverb is still in use in France:—'On ne saurait faire d'une buse un epervier.' The buzzard is a lazy, cowardly hawk, feeding on vermin, and utterly unfit for falconry; the epervier, or sparrow-hawk, on the contrary, is the most fierce and courageous, for its size, of all the hawks, and was highly esteemed. The corresponding proverb in English is not so refined:—'You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.'

Thanne alle abawid in shewing,
Anoon spake Drede, right thus seiyng,
And seide, 'Daunger, I drede me,
That thou ne wolt bisy be
To kepe that thou hast to kepe;
Whanne thou shuldist wake, thou art aslepe.
Thou shalt be greved certeynly,
If the aspie Jelousie,
Or if he fynde thee in blame.
He hath to day assailed Shame,
And chased awey, with gret manace,
Bialacoil oute of this place,
And swereth shortly that he shalle
Enclose hym in a sturdy walle;
And alle is for thi wikkednesse,
For that thee faileth straungenesse.
Thyne herte I trowe be failed alle;
Thou shalt repente in specialle,
If Jelousie the sooth knewe;
Thou shalt forthenke, and sore rewe.'
With that the cherl his clubbe gan shake,
Frounyng his eyen gan to make,
And hidous chere; as man in rage,
For ire he brente in his visage.
Whanne that he herd hym blamed soo,
He seide, 'Oute of my witte I goo;
To be discomfyt I have gret wronge.
Certis, I have now lyved to longe,
Sith I may not this closer kepe;
Alle quykke I wolde be dolven deepe,[1]
If ony man shal more repeire
Into this gardyne for foule or faire.
Myne herte for ire goth afere,[2]
That I lete ony entre heere.

[1] That is, 'Would that I might be buried alive, if any man,' &c.—See vol. vi. p. 143, note 1.

[2] That is, 'My heart beats for anger.'

I have do folie now I see,
But now it shalle amended bee.
Who settith foot heere ony more,
Truly he shalle repente it sore;
For no man moo intō this place
Of me to entre shal have grace.
Lever I hadde with swerdis tweyne,
Thurghoute myne herte, in every veyne
Perced to be, with many a wounde,
Thanne slouthe shulde in me be founde.
From hennesforth, by nyght or day,
I shalle defende it if I may
Withouten ony excepcioun
Of ech maner condicioun;
And if I it ony man graunte,
Holdeth me for recreaunte.'
Thanne Daunger on his feet gan stonde,
And hente a burdoun in his honde.
Wroth in his ire ne lefte he nought,[1]
But thurgh the verger he hath sought,
If he myght fynde hole or trace,
Where thurgh that me mote forth by pace,
Or ony gappe, he dide it close,
That no man myght touche a rose
Of the roser alle aboute;
He shitteth every man withoute.
Thus day by day Daunger is wers,
More wondirfulle and more dyvers,
And feller eke than evere he was;
For hym fulle ofte I synge 'allas!'
For I ne may nought thurgh his ire
Recovere that I moost desire.

[1] The meaning is, 'In his ire he did not cease to be wroth.' *Ire* and *wrath* would appear at first sight to be synonymous; but the latter may imply the outward manifestation of rage (courroux), which does not necessarily accompany the former. The original is—

'Semblant fit d'estre correcies.'

Myne herte, allas, wole brest atwoo,
For Bialacoil I wratthed soo.
For certeynly in every membre
I quoke, whanne I me remembre
Of the bothom, which I wolde
Fulle ofte a day sene and biholde.
And whanne I thenke upon the kisse,
And how mych joye and blisse,
I hadde thurgh the savour swete,
For wante of it I grone and grete.
Me thenkith I fele yit in my nose[1]
The swete savour of the rose.
And now I woot that I mote goo
So fer the fresh floures froo,
To me fulle welcome were the deth;
Absens therof, allas, me sleeth!
For whilom with this rose, allas,
I touched nose, mouth, and face;
But now the deth I must abide.
But[2] Love consente another tyde,
That onys I touche may and kisse,
I trowe my peyne shalle never lisse.
Theron is alle my coveitise,
Which brent myn herte in many wise.
Now shal repaire agayn sighinge,
Long wacche on nyghtis, and no slepinge;
Thought in wisshing, torment, and woo,
With many a turnyng to and froo,
That half my peyne I can not telle.
For I am fallen into helle,
From paradys and welthe, the more
My turment greveth;[3] more and more,

[1] Chaucer has not rendered this passage with his usual happiness of expression:—

'Car encor ai où cuer enclose
La douce savour de la Rose.'

[2] *But* here means *unless*.

[3] That is, 'Inasmuch as I am fallen into hell from paradise and wealth, so much the more my torment grieveth me.'

Anoieth now the bittirnesse,
That I toforn have felt swetnesse.[1]
And Wikkid-Tunge, thurgh his falshede,
Causeth alle my woo and drede.
On me he leieth a pitous charge,
Bicause his tunge was to large.
Now it is tyme shortly that I
Telle you som thyng of Jelousie,
That was in gret suspecioun.
Aboute hym lefte he no masoun,
That stoon coude leye, ne querrour,
He hirede hem to make a tour.
And first, the roses for to kepe,
Aboute hem made he a diche deepe,
Right wondir large, and also broode;
Upon the whiche also stode
Of squared stoon a sturdy walle,
Which on a cragge was founded alle,
And right grete thikkenesse eke it bare.
Aboute it was founded square
An hundred fademe on every side,
It was alle liche longe and wide.
Lest ony tyme it were assayled,
Ful wel aboute it was batayled;
And rounde enviroun eke were sette
Ful many a riche and faire tourette.
At every corner of this walle
Was sette a tour fulle pryncipalle;
And everich hadde, withoute fable,
A portecolys defensable
To kepe of enemyes, and to greve,
That there her force wolde preve.
And eke amydde this purprise
Was maad a tour of gret maistrise;
A fairer saugh no man with sight,
Large and wide, and of gret myght.

[1] This comparison between former happiness and present misery is not in the original.

They dredde noon assaut,
Of gynne, gunne, nor skaffaut.[1]
The temprure of the mortere
Was maad of licour wonder dere;
Of quykke lyme persant and egre,
The which was tempred with vynegre.[2]
The stoon was hard of ademaunt,
Wherof they made the foundement.
The tour was rounde maad in compas;
In alle this world no riccher was,

---

[1] *Gynne* means an engine of war. There were several kinds, some called petrariæ, others mangonels.—See vol. vi. p. 256, note 1. In *The House of Fame*, also, Chaucer alludes to the use of gunnery.—*Ib.* p. 247, note 1. The *skaffaut*, or scaffold, was a kind of engine which was wheeled to the walls, and by means of which the soldier could fight on an equality with the besieged, or under cover of which they worked the battering-ram.

The following extract from Sir Walter Scott's *Hist. of Scotland* will serve to illustrate its use:—'The Earl of Salisbury then commanded his engineers to bring forward to the assault an engine of another kind, being a sort of wooden shed or house, rolled forward on wheels, with a roof of peculiar strength, which, from resembling the ridge of a hog's back, occasioned the machine to be called a sow. This, according to the old mode of warfare, was thrust close up to the walls of a besieged castle or city, and served to protect from the arrows or stones of the besieged a party of soldiers placed within the sow, who, being thus defended, were in the meanwhile employed in undermining the wall. When the Countess of March saw this engine advanced to the walls of the castle, she called out to the Earl of Salisbury in derision, and making a kind of rhyme—

'Beware, Montagow,
For farrow shall thy sow.'

At the same time she made a signal, and a huge fragment of rock, which hung prepared for the purpose, was dropped down from the wall upon the sow, whose roof was thus dashed to pieces. As the English soldiers who had been within it were running as fast as they could to get out of the way of the arrows and stones which were discharged on them from the wall, Black Agnes called out, 'Behold the litter of English pigs.''—*Hist. of Scotland*, c. xiv.

[2] If it be true that mortar was ever in the middle ages tempered with vinegar, the superior hardness and durability of the concrete of which the walls of old churches and castles are composed may be accounted for. The flint churches of Norfolk and Suffolk are generally built of very small pebbles imbedded in mortar almost as hard as the flints themselves; and, in the very old Norman work especially,

Ne better ordeiyned therwithalle.
Aboute the tour was maad a walle,
So that bitwixt that and the tour,
Roses were sette of swete savour,
With many roses that thei bere.
And eke withynne the castelle were
Spryngoldes, gunnes, bows, archers;
And eke above atte corners
Men seyn over the walle stonde
Grete engynes, who were nygh honde;
And in the kernels heere and there,
Of arblasters grete plente were.
Noon armure myght her stroke withstonde,
It were foly to prece to honde.[1]
Withoute the diche were lystes maade,
With walle batayled large and brade,
For men and hors shulde not atteyne
To neighe the dyche over the pleyne.
Thus Jelousie hath enviroun
Sette aboute his garnysoun
With walles rounde, and diche depe,
Oonly the roser for to kepe.
And Daunger erly and late
The keyes kept of the utter gate,
The which openeth toward the eest.
And he hadde with hym atte leest
Thritty servauntes echon by name.
That other gate kepte Shame,

---

oven the walls which are faced with ashlar are found to be really in the inside composed of concrete.

[1] As this account of the implements of war in the middle ages is interesting, the original is here given:—

'Dedans le chastel ot perrieres [petrariæ, here called springolds]
Et engins de maintes manieres.
Vous poissiés les mangonnians
Voir par dessus les creniaus; [kernels, crenelles or battlements]
Et as archiers tout entour
Sunt les arbalestes à tour,
Qu' arméure n'i puet tenir.'

Which openede, as it was couth,
Toward the parte of the south.
Sergeauntes assigned were hir too
Full many, hir wille for to doo.
Thanne Drede hadde in hir baillie
The kepyng of the conestablere,
Toward the north, I undirstonde,
That openyde upon the lyft honde,
The which for no thyng may be sure,
But if she doe bisy cure
Erly on morowe and also late,
Strongly to shette and barre the gate.
Of every thing that she may see,
Drede is aferd, wher so she be;
For with a puff of litelle wynde,
Drede is astonyed in hir mynde.
Therfore, for stelynge of the rose,[1]
I rede hir nought the yate unclose.
A foulis flight wulde make hir flee,
And eke a shadowe if she it see.
Thanne Wikked-Tunge fulle of envye,
With soudiours of Normandye,[2]
As he that causeth alle the bate,
Was keper of the fourthe gate,

[1] 'For stealing of the rose,' is a common old English idiom, meaning, 'for fear that the rose should be stolen.' Thus, in Percy's ballad of Syr Cauline, a lady is carried 'for fyling of her feet,' *i. e.*, for fear her feet should be defiled.

[2] In M. Méon's edition this line is different. The couplet stands thus:

'Male-Bouche, que Diex maudié!
Qui ne pense fors a boidié.'

In a note he says:—'Dans le plus grand nombre de manuscripts, au lieu de ce vers, on lit celui-ci:—

'Ot sodoiers de Normandie,

'dans d'autres on les dit de Lombendie. D'ou l'on peut inferer avec raison que les anciens copistes prenoient souvent la liberté de faire les changemens qui leur plaisoient.'

The Norman soldiers, alternately subjects of France and England, were probably regarded by the French with all the virulence of hatred which distinguishes civil discord. Being a thoroughly warlike race, they were also, probably, remarkable for their insolence.

And also to the tother three,
He went fulle ofte for to see.
Whanne his lotte was to wake a nyght,
His instrumentis wolde he dight,
For to blowe and make sowne,
Ofte thanne he hath enchesoun;
And walken oft upon the walle,
Corners and wikettis over alle
Fulle narwe sercheñ and espie;
Though he nought fonde, yit wold he lye.
Discordaunt ever fro armonye,
And distoned from melodie,
Controve he wolde, and foule fayle,
With hornepipes of Cornewaile.[1]
In floytes made he discordaunce,
And in his musyk, with myschaunce,
He wolde seyn with notes newe,
That he fonde no womman trewe,
Ne that he saugh never in his lyf,
Unto hir husbonde a trewe wyf;
Ne noon so ful of honeste,
That she nyl laughe and mery be,
Whanne that she hereth, or may espie,
A man speken of leccherie.
Everiche of hem hath somme vice;
Oon is dishonest, another is nyce;

[1] The original is—

'Une hore dit lés [laies] et descors,
Et sonnez doux de controvaille
As estives de Cornoaille.'

Controve means, of course, to compose poetry, whence the word trobador, or troubadour. *Estives* M. Méon interprets *trompettes*, but Chaucer *hornpipes*, meaning, perhaps, some kind of pipe made of horn. *Cornouaille* is a district of Brittany, not the English county, as Warton supposes. The edition which he used appears to have read *chalemeaux de Cornouaille*; and it seems not unlikely that this was the reading of Chaucer's original, and that he wrote *corn*-pipes, which would be the proper translation of *chalemeaux*. Thus Virgil:—

'Musam meditaris *avenâ*.'

And Shakspeare:—

'And shepherds pipe on *oaten straws*.'

If oon be fulle of vylanye,
Another hath a likerous ighe;
If oone be fulle of wantonesse,
Another is a chideresse.
Thus Wikked-Tunge, (God yeve hym shame!)
Can putt hem everychone in blame;
Withoute desert[1] and causeles,
He lieth, though they ben giltles.
I have pite to sene the sorwe,
That waketh bothe eve and morwe,
To innocentis doith such grevaunce;
I pray God yeve him evel chaunce,
That he ever so bisie is,
Of ony womman to seyn amys!
Eke Jelousie God confounde!
That hath maad a tour so rounde,
And made aboute a garisoun,
So sette Bealacoil in prisoun;
The which is shette there in the tour,
Fulle longe to holde there sojour,
There for to lyve in penaunce.
And for to do hym more grevaunce,
Which[2] hath ordeyned Jelousie,
An olde vekke for to espye
The maner of his governaunce;
The which devel, in hir enfaunce
Hadde lerned of Loves arte,
And of his pleyes toke hir parte;
She was except[3] in his servise.
She knewe eche wrenche and every gise
Of love, and every wile,
It was harder hir to gile.

---

[1] For *desert*, the MS. reads *dissait*, probably a clerical error.

[2] This line appears to be corrupt; *which* has no antecedent. *Which* may mean, however, *what* (see vol. i. p. 175, note 1); and the construction would then be, 'Which [*what*] an olde vekke hath Jelousie ordained!' &c.

[3] The printed editions read *expert;* but *except* is probably right, meaning *accepted.*

Of Bealacoil she toke ay hede,
That evere he lyveth in woo and drede.
He kepte hym koy and eke prive,
Lest in hym she hadde see
Ony foly countenaunce,
For she knewe alle the olde daunce.[1]
And aftir this, whanne Jelousie
Hadde Bealacoil in his baillie,
And shette hym up that was so fre,
For seure of hym he wolde be,
He trusteth sore in his castelle;
The stronge werk hym liketh welle.
He dradde nat that no glotouns
Shulde stele his roses or bothoms.
The roses weren assured alle
Defenced with the stronge walle.
Now Jelousie fulle wel may be
Of drede devoide in liberte,
Whether that he slepe or wake;
For of his roses may noon be take.
But I, allas, now morne shalle;
Bicause I was withoute the walle,
Fulle moche doole and moone I made.
Who hadde wist what woo I hadde,
I trowe he wolde have had pite.
Love too deere had soolde to me
The good that of his love hadde I.
I wente aboute it alle queyntly;
But now thurgh doublyng of my peyne
I see he wolde it selle ageyne,
And me a newe bargeyne leere,
The which alle oute the more is deere,
For the solace that I have lorn,
Thanne I hadde it never aforn.

[1] This is a French expression. The original is:—
'Qu' ele scet toute la vielle dance.'

Certayn I am ful like indeede
To hym that caste in erthe his seede;
And hath joie of the newe spryng,
Whanne it greneth in the gynnyng,
And is also faire and fresh of flour,
Lusty to seen, swoote of odour.
But er he it in his sheves shere,
May falle a weder that shal it dere,
And make it to fade and falle,
The stalke, the greyne, and floures alle;
That to the tylyers is fordone
The hope that he hadde to soone.
I drede certeyn that so fare I;
For hope and travaile sikerlye
Ben me byraft alle with a storme;
The floure nel seeden of my corne.
For Love hath so avaunced me,
Whanne I bigan my pryvite
To Bialacoil alle for to telle,
Whom I ne fonde froward ne felle,
But toke agree alle hool my play;
But Love is of so hard assay,
That alle at oonys he reved me,
Whanne I wente[1] best aboven to have be.
It is of Love, as of Fortune,
That chaungeth ofte, and nyl contune;[2]
Which whilom wole on folk smyle,
And glowmbe on hem another while;
Now freend, now foo, shalt[3] hir feele,
For a twynklyng tourne hir wheele.
She can writhe hir heed awey,
This is the concours of hir pley;
She canne arise that doth morne,
And whirle adown, and overturne

[1] *Wente* is the preterite tense of *to weene*, to think.
[2] A violent poetical licence for *continue*.
[3] *Thou* is understood, and is probably omitted by mistake.

Who sittith hieghst, but as hir lust;
A foole is he that wole hir trust.
For it is I that am come down
Thurgh change and revolucioun!
Sith Bealacoil mote fro me twynne,
Shette in her prisoun yonde withynne,
His absence at myn herte I fele;
For alle my joye and alle myne hele
Was in hym and in the rose,
That but you wol, which hym doth close,
Opene, that I may him see,
Love nyl that I cured be
Of the peynes that I endure,
Nor of my cruel aventure.
A, Bialacoil, myn owne deere!
Though thou be now a prisonere,
Keepe atte leste thyne herte to me,
And suffre not that it daunted be,
Ne late not Jelousie in his rage,
Putten thine herte in no servage.
Although he chastice thee withoute,
And make thy body unto hym loute,
Have herte as hard as dyamaunt,
Stedefast, and nought pliaunt.
In prisoun though thi body be
At large kepe thyne herte free.[1]
A trewe herte wole not plie
For no manace that it may drye.[2]
If Jelousie doth thee payne,
Quyte hym his while thus agayne,
To venge thee atte leest in thought,
If other way thou maist nought;

---

[1] This passage will remind the reader of the beautiful verses in Percy's *Reliques*, entitled *Loyalty Confined*.

[2] M. Méon illustrates this passage with the mediæval proverb :—
'Qui plus castigat, plus amore ligat.'

And in this wise sotilly
Worche, and wynne thy maistrie.
But yit I am in gret affray,
Lest thou do not as I say;
I drede thou canst me gret maugre,[1]
That thou emprisoned art for me;
But that not for my trespas,
For thurgh me never discovred was
Yit thyng that ought be secree.
Wel more anoy is in me,
Than is in thee of this myschaunce;
For I endure more harde penaunce
Than ony can seyne or thynke,
That for the sorwe almost I synke.
Whanne I remembre me of my woo,
Fulle nygh out of my witt I goo!
Inward myn herte I feele blede,
For comfortles the deth I drede.
Owe I not wel to have distresse,
Whanne fals,[2] thurgh hir wikkednesse,
And traitours, that arn envyous,
To noyen me be so coragious?
A, Bialacoil! fulle wel I see,
That they hem shape to disceyve thee,
To make thee buxom to her lawe,
And with her corde thee to drawe
Where so hem lust, right at her wille;
I drede they have thee brought thertille.
Withoute comfort, the thought me sleeth;
This game wole brynge me to my deth.
For if youre good wille I leese,
I mote be deed; I may not chese.
And if that thou foryete me,
Myne herte shal nevere in likyng be;

---

[1] This is a literal rendering of the idiom in the original:—
'Ains crient que mal gré me savés.'

[2] *Persons* is here understood to agree with false.

Nor elleswhere fynde solace,
If I be putt out of your grace,
As it shal never been, I hope;
Thanne shulde I falle in wanhope.[1]
Allas, in wanhope—nay, pardee!
For I wole never dispeired be.
If Hope me faile, thanne am I
Ungracious and unworthy;
In Hope I wole comforted be,
For Love, whanne he bitaught hir me,
Seide, that Hope, where so I goo,
Shulde ay be reles to my woo.
But what and she my baalis beete,[2]
And be to me curteis and sweete?
She is in no thyng fulle certeyne.
Lovers she putt in fulle gret peyne,
And makith hem with woo to deele.
Hir faire biheeste disceyveth feele,
For she wole byhote sikirly,
And failen aftir outrely.
A, that is fulle noyous thyng!
For many a lover in lovyng
Hangeth upon hir, and trusteth fast,
Whiche leese her travel at the last.
Of thyng to comen she woot right nought;
Therfore, if it be wysely sought,

[1] The sorrow and lamentation of l'Amant for the loss of Bialacoil are intended to represent the misery which the lover suffers, when deprived of the conversation of his mistress.

At this line ends the portion of the poem written by William of Lorris. In the MSS. of the original the different sections are divided by short explanations in verse, like those which head the cantos in Spenser's *Faery Queen*, and *Hudibras*. These M. Méon has printed; but he justly attributes them to the later copyists. The following occurs here:—

'Cy endroit trespassa Guillaume
De Lorris, et n'en fist plus pseaulme;
Mais, aprés plus de quarante ans,
Maistre Jehan de Meung ce Romans
Parfist, ainsi comme je treuve;
Et ici commence son œuvre.'

[2] That is, 'Remedy my misfortune.'

Hir counseille foly is to take.[1]
For many tymes, whanne she wole make
A fulle good silogisme, I dreede
That aftirward ther shal in deede
Folwe an evelle conclusioun;
This putte me in confusioun.
For many tymes I have it seen,
That many have bigyled been,
For trust that they have sette in hope,
Which felle hem aftirward a slope.[2]
But, nevertheles, yit gladly she wolde,
That he that wole hym with hir holde,
Hadde alle tymes his[3] purpos clere,
Withoute deceyte ony where.
That she desireth sikirly;
Whanne I hir blamed, I dide foly.
But what avayleth hir good wille,
Whanne she ne may staunche my stounde ille?[4]
That helpith litel that she may doo,
Outake biheest unto my woo.
And heeste certeyn in no wise,
Withoute yift, is not to preise.
Whanne heest and deede asundry varie,
They doon a gret contrarie.
Thus am I possed up and doun
With dool, thought, and confusioun;

---

[1] The direct construction is, 'To take hir counseille is foly.'

[2] The meaning appears to be that Hope afterwards turned out to be like a sloping, or inclined surface, not affording them any firm standing-place.

[3] The MS. reads *her;* but *his* appears to be necessary to the sense, and is, besides, supported by the original:—

'Et non porquant si vodroit ele
Que le meillor de la querelle
Eust cil qui la tient à soi.'

The meaning is, 'She desires that he who holds with her, [takes her part,] should at all times have his purpose, or what he proposes or wishes, perfectly, and without deceit.'

[4] *Stounde* is perhaps written by mistake for *wounde*. The original is:—

'S'ele ne me fait des doloir.'

Of my desese ther is no noumbre.
Daunger and Shame me encumbre,
Drede also, and Jelousie,
And Wikked-Tunge fulle of envie,
Of whiche the sharpe and cruel ire
Fulle ofte me putte in gret martire.
They han my joye fully lette,
Sith Bialacoil they have bishette
Fro me in prisoun wikkidly,
Whom I love so entierly,
That it wole my bane be,
But I the sonner may hym see.
And yit moreover wurst of alle,
Ther is sette to kepe, foule hir bifalle,
A rympled vekke, ferre ronne in age,
Frownyng and yelowe in hir visage,
Which in awayte lyth day and nyght,
That noon of hem may have a sight.
Now mote my sorwe enforced[1] be;
Fulle soth it is, that Love yaf me
Three wonder yiftes of his grace,
Which I have lorn, now in this place,
Sith they ne may withoute drede
Helpen but lytel, who taketh heede.
For here availeth no Swete-Thought,
And Swete-Speche helpith right nought.
The thridde was called Swete-Lokyng,
That now is lorn without lesyng.
Yiftes were faire, but not forthy
They helpe me but symply,
But[2] Bialacoil loosed be,
To gon at large and to be free.
For hym my lyf lyth alle in doute,
But if he come the rather[3] oute.

[1] *Enforced* means *increased in force.*
[2] *But* here means *unless.*
[3] *Rather* means sooner, being the comparative degree of *rathe*, soon, early.

Allas! I trowe it wole not bene!
For how shuld I evermore hym sene?
He may not oute, and that is wronge,
Bycause the tour is so stronge.
How shulde he oute? by whos prowesse,
Oute of so stronge a forteresse?
By me certeyn it nyl be doo;
God woot I have no witte therto!
But wel I woot I was in rage,
Whanne I to Love dide homage.
Who was in cause,[1] in sothfastnesse,
But hir silfe, dame Idelnesse,
Which me conveied thurgh faire praiere
To entre into that faire verger?
She was to blame me to leve,
The which now doth me soore greve.
A foolis word is nought to trowe,
Ne worth an appel for to lowe;[2]
Men shulde hym snybbe bittirly,
At pryme temps of his foly.
I was a fool, and she me leevede,
Thurgh whom I am right nought releeved.
Sheo[3] accomplisshed alle my wille,
That now me greveth wondir ille;
Resoun me seide what shulde falle.
A fool my silf I may wel calle,
That love asyde I hadde not leyde,
And trowed that dame Resoun seide.
Resoun hadde bothe skile and ryght,
Whanne she me blamed, with alle hir myght,
To medle of love, that hath me shent;
But certeyn now I wole repente.
'And shulde I repente? Nay, parde!
A fals traitour thanne shulde I be.

[1] *In cause* means in blame.
[2] *Lowe* appears to be written for *allowe*, approve.
[3] From the A.S. *heo*, she.

The develles engynnes[1] wolde me take,
If I my Love wolde forsake,
Or Bialacoil falsly bitrăye.
Shulde I at myscheef hate hym? nay,
Sith he now for his curtesie
Is in prisoun of Jelousie.
Curtesie certeyn dide he me,
So mych, that it may not yolden[2] be,
Whanne he the hay passen me lete,
To kisse the rose, faire and swete;
Shulde I therfore cunne hym mawgre?
Nay, certeynly, it shal not be,
For Love shalle nevere, yeve Good wille,[3]
Here of me, thurgh word or wille,
Offence or complaynt more or lesse,
Neither of Hope nor Idilnesse;
For certis, it were wrong that I
Hated hem for her curtesie.
There is not ellys, but suffre and thenke,
And waken whanne I shulde wynke;[4]
Abide in hope, til Love, thurgh chaunce,
Sende me socour or allegeaunce,

---

[1] The *devil's engynnes* means the *ingenium*, or mind proper to that person. The original is:—'Maufez m'auroient envaï.' Upon which M. Lantin de Dammerey observes:—C'est le nom qu'on donnoit au diable dans les vieux romans.

Les pères de l'eglise, à l'exemple des premiers Chrétiens, avoient un tel horreur pour le diable qu'ils se faisoient un scrupule de le nommer, et ne lui donnoient point d'autre nom que celui de *Malus*, qui veut dire mauvais, ou malin: de la vient que plusieurs personnes pretendent que le *libera nos a malo* de l'oraison dominicale ne signifie autre chose que délivrez-nous du malin, ou du mauvais, qui vient de *maufez*, c'est-à-dire, qui fait le mal.—*Observ. sur l'Hist. de S. Louis, par Du Cange.*

It appears that Chaucer had no such scruple, for he is continually using this name. Indeed, it seems never to have penetrated into England, for the word is of frequent occurence in the visions of *Piers Ploughman*, and other authors of this period.

[2] That is, 'requited.' Thus, God yield it you,' *i. e.*, God requite you for it, is a common expression in Shakspeare, in the mouths of the clowns and peasants, among whom the old forms of religion lingered longest.

[3] That is, 'If God will.' [4] That is, 'Lie awake at night.'

Expectant ay tille I may mete,
To geten mercy of that swete.
Whilom I thenke how Love to me
Seide he wolde take atte gree[1]
My servise, if unpacience
Caused me to done offence.
He seide, 'In thank I shal it take,
And high maister eke thee make,
If wikkednesse ne reve it thee;
But sone I trowe that shalle not be.'
These were his wordis by and by;[2]
It semede he lovede me trewly.
Now is ther not but serve hym wele,
If that I thenke his thanke to fele.
My good, myne harme, lyth hool in me;
In Love may no defaute be;
For trewe Love ne failide never man.
Sothly the faute mote nedys than
(As God forbede!) be founde in me,
And how it cometh, I can not see.
Now late it goon as it may goo;
Whether Love wole socoure me or sloo,
He may do hool on me his wille.
I am so sore bounde hym tille,
From his servise I may not fleen,
For lyf and deth, withouten wene,
Is in his hande; I may not chese;
He may me doo bothe wynne and leese.
And sith so sore he doth me greve,
Yit, if my lust he wolde acheve,
To Bialacoil goodly to be,
I yeve no force what felle on me.
For though I dye, as I mote nede,
I praye Love, of his goodlyhede,

[1] To take at gree means to receive with favour.

[2] *By and by* means one after another, word by word. The original is:—

'Ce sont si dit tout mot à mot.

To Bialacoil do gentylnesse,
For whom I lyve in such distresse,
That I mote deyen for penaunce.
But first, withoute repentaunce,
I wole me confesse in good entent,
And make in haste my testament,
As lovers doon that feelen smerte:—
To Bialacoil leve I myne herte
Alle hool, withoute departyng,
Or doublenesse of repentyng.

COMENT RAISOUN VIENT A L'AMANT.[1]

Thus as I made my passage
In compleynt, and in cruel rage,
And I not where to fynde a leche,
That couthe unto myne helpyng eche,
Sodeynly agayn comen doun
Out of hir tour I saugh Resoun,
Discrete and wiis, and fulle plesaunt,
And of hir porte fulle avenaunt.
The right weye she tooke to me,
Which stode in gret perplexite,
That was posshed in every side,
That I nyst where I myght abide,
Tille she demurely sad of chere
Seide to me as she come nere:—
'Myne owne freend, art thou yit greved?
How is this quarelle yit acheved
Of Loves side? Anoon me telle,
Hast thou not yit of love thi fille?
Art thou not wery of thy servise
That the hath in sich wise?

[1] In Méon's edition the following short argument is here inserted:—
'Cy est la très belle Raison,
Qui est preste en toute saison
De donner bon conseil à ceux
Qui d'eulx saulver sont paresceux.'

What joye hast thou in thy loving?
Is it swete or bitter thyng?
Canst thou yit chese, late me see,
What best thy socour myght be?
Thou servest a fulle noble lorde,
That maketh thee thralle for thi rewarde,
Which ay renewith thi turment,
With foly so he hath thee blent;
Thou felle in myscheef thilke day.
Whanne thou didest, the sothe to say,
Obeysaunce and eke homage,
Thou wroughtest no thyng as the sage.
Whanne thou bicam his liege man,
Thou didist a gret foly than;
Thou wistest not what felle therto,
With what lord thou haddist to do.
If thou haddist hym wel knowe
Thou haddist nought be brought so lowe;
For if thou wistest what it were,
Thou noldist serve hym half a yeer,
Not a weke, nor half a day,
Ne yit an hour withoute delay,
Ne never ilovede paramours,
His lordshippe is so fulle of shoures.[1]
Knowest hym ought?'

L'Amaunt. Yhe, dame, parde!

Raisoun. Nay, nay.

L'Amaunt. Yhes, I.

Raisoun. Wherof, late se?

L'Amaunt. Of that he seide I shulde be
Glad to have sich lord as he,
And maister of sich seignorie.

Raisoun. Knowist hym no more?

L'Amaunt. Nay, certis, I,[2]

---

[1] *Lordshippe* here means *kingdom*. Reason says that the service of love is as liable to reverses, as a fine day is to be obscured with showers.

[2] The *I*, and six lines before, is emphatic. The original is *Ge, non*.

Save that he yaf me rewles there,
And wente his wey, I nyste where,
And I aboode bounde in balaunce.
Raisoun. Lo, there a noble conisaunce![1]
But I wille that thou knowe hym now
Gynnyng and eende, sith that thou
Art so anguisshous and mate,
Disfigured oute of astate;
Ther may no wrecche have more of woo,
Ne caityf noon enduren soo.
It were to every man sittyng,
Of his lord have knowleching.
For if thou knewe hym oute of doute,
Lightly thou shulde escapen oute
Of the prisoun that marreth thee.
L'Amaunt. Yhe, dame! sith my lord is he,
And I his man maad with myn honde,[2]
I wolde right fayne undirstonde
To knowe of what kynde he be,
If ony wolde enforme me.
Raisoun. I wolde, seide Resoun, thee lere,
Sith thou to lerne hast sich desire,

---

[1] Knowledge. Reason says, ironically, 'You seem indeed to know a great deal about him!' The original is:—

'Certes c'est povre cognoisance.'

[2] In allusion to the ceremony of doing homage, in which the man put his hands between those of his lord, thus described by Fauchet, *Des fiefs, selon l'usage du Châtelet de Paris*:—'Le seigneur prenoit entre ses deux paulmes les mains de son vassal jointes, lequel à genoux, nue tête, sans manteau, ceinture, épée, ni éperons, disoit: Sire je deviens vôtre homme de bouche et de mains, et promets foy et loyauté et de garder vôtre droit à mon pouvoir, à vôtre semonce ou a celle de vôtre Bailly à mon sens. Cela dit, le seigneur baisoit le vassal sur la bouche:

'On trouve dans le roman de Lancelot que lorsqu'on prenoit possession d'un fief, et que l'on en étoit revêteu, on s'agenouilloit devant le Seigneur Lige, et on lui baisoit le soulier, et le vassal qui étoit investi du Fief, recevoit le gand de son Seigneur.'

This latter custom is alluded to before.—See *ante*, p. 76.

And shewe thee withouten fable
A thyng that is not demonstrable.
Thou shalt, withouten science,
And knowe, withouten experience,[1]
The thyng that may not knowen be,
Ne wist ne shewid in no degre.
Thou maist the sothe of it not witen,
Though in thee it were writen.
Thou shalt not knowe therof more,
While thou art reuled by his lore.
But unto hym that love wole flee,
The knotte may unclosed bee,
Which hath to thee, as it is founde,
So long be knette and not unbounde.[2]
Now sette wel thyne entencioun,
To here of love the discripcioun.
Love it is an hatefulle pees,
A free acquitaunce withoute relees,
A trouthe frette[3] fulle of falsheede,
A sikernesse alle sette in drede,
In herte is a dispeiryng hope,
And fulle of hope it is wanhope,
Wise woodnesse, and woode[4] resoun,
A swete perelle in to droune,
An hevy birthen lyght to bere,
A wikked wawe awey to were.[5]

[1] The original is :—

'Si sauras tantost sans science
Et congnoistras sans congnoisance
Ce qui ne puet estre seu
Né dimonstre ne congneu.'

[2] The meaning is, that no lover can understand the true nature of love, as long as he is under its influence.

[3] The MS. reads *And thurgh the frette*, which is nonsense. Tyrwhitt has pointed out the true reading, which is adopted in the text, being supported by the original :—

'C'est loiautés la desloiaus.'

[4] The MS. reads *voide*, which is evidently a mistake for *woode* :—

'C'est raison toute forcenable,
C'est forcenne resnable.'

[5] There is no line corresponding to this in the original.

It is Karibdous perilous,
Disagreable and gracious.
It is discordaunce that can accorde,
And accordaunce to discorde.
It is kunnyng withoute science,
Wisdome withoute sapience,
Witte withoute discrecioun,
Havoire withoute possessioun.
It is sike[1] hele and hool sekenesse,
A trust[2] drowned in dronknesse,
And helth fulle of maladie,
And charite fulle of envie,
And anger fulle of habundaunce,
And a gredy suffisaunce;
Delite right fulle of hevynesse,
And dreried[3] fulle of gladnesse;
Bitter swetnesse and swete errour,
Right evelle savoured good savour;
Synne that pardoun hath withynne,
And pardoun spotted withoute with synne;[4]
A peyne also it is joious,
And felonye right pitous;
Also pley that selde is stable,
And stedefast right mevable;

---

[1] The MS. followed by Speght reads *like*, which is an error of the copyist, who did not understand the paradoxes contained in every line.

'C'est langor toute santeive,
C'est santé tout maladive.'

[2] *Trust*, or *thrust*, means thirst, the *r* being often thus transposed. The MS. reads *drowned and dronkennesse*, which is evidently a mere clerical error. The original is:—

'C'est la soif qui tous jors est ivre,
Yvresce, qui de soif s'enyvre.'

[3] That is, *Drerihed*, dreariness.

[4] The MS. reads *withoute sin*, which makes nonsense. *With* has been added as being necessary to the sense, and likely, from its beginning like the next word, to have been omitted by the copyist. It is also supported by the original:—

'Entechiés de pardon pechiés,
De pechiecés pardon entechiés.'

A strengthe weyked[1] to stonde upright,
And feblenesse fulle of myght;
Witte unavised, sage folie,
And joie fulle of turmentrie;
A laughter it is weping ay,
Reste that traveyleth nyght and day,
Also a swete helle it is,
And a soroufulle Paradys;
A plesaunt gayl and esy prisoun,
And fulle of froste somer sesoun;
Pryme temps fulle of frostes white,
And May devoide of al delite;
With seer braunches, blossoms ungrene,
And newe fruyt fillid with wynter tene.
It is a slowe may not forbere
Ragges ribaned, with gold, to were;[2]
For al so welle wole love be sette
Under ragges as riche rochette;
And eke as wel be amourettes
In mournyng blak, as bright burnettes.[3]
For noon is of so mochel pris,
Ne no man founden so wys,

---

[1] That is, 'Too weak:'—

'Force enferme, enfermeté fors,
Qui tout esmuet par ses effors.'

[2] 'It is a moth, which frets rags, and cloth of gold, alike.'

[3] That is, 'Amourettes [sweethearts] are as agreeable when clothed in black mourning as when arrayed in the most splendid garments.' The original is:—

'C'est taigne qui rien ne refuse,
Les porpres et les buriaus use;
Car ausinc bien sont amoretes
Sous buriau comme sous brunettes.'

Upon this M. Méon has the following note:—'Bureau, grosse étoffe faite de laine; c'est la même chose que la bure, qui, suivant la definition de Borel, est une étoffe velue de couleur rousse ou grisâtre, en Latin burellus, ainsi qu'il est nommée dans le testament de S. Louis: Item, legamus DC. libras ad burellos emendos pro pauperibus vestiendis.'

This appears to be the same as the *bruna veste*, or widow's habit, in which Boccaccio clothes Cryseyde.—See vol. v. p. 21, note 2. *Brunette*

Ne noon so high is of parage,
Ne no man founde of witt so sage;
No man so hardy ne so wight,
Ne no man of so mychel myght;
Noon so fulfilled of bounte,
That he with love may daunted be.[1]
Alle the world holdith this way;
Love makith alle to goon myswey.
But it be they of yvel lyf,
Whom genius cursith, man and wyf,
That wrongly werke ageyn nature.
Noon such I love, ne have no cure
Of such as loves servauntes bene,
And wole not by my counsel flene.
For I ne preise that lovyng,
Wherthurgh man, at the laste eendyng,
Shalle calle hem wrecchis fulle of woo,
Love greveth hem and shendith soo.
But if thou wolt wel love eschewe,
For to escape out of his mewe,
And make al hool thi sorwe to slake,
No bettir counsel maist thou take,
Than thynke to fleen; wel iwis,
May nought helpe elles; for wite thou this:—
If thou flee it, it shal flee thee;
Folowe it, and folowen shal it thee.' [seyne,
L'Amaunt. Whanne I hadde herde alle Resoun
Which hadde spilt hir speche in veyne:
'Dame,' seide I, 'I dar wel sey
Of this avaunt me wel I may

---

is a rich stuff worn by people of rank. The same idea is thus rendered by La Fontaine:—

'Riens moins, reprit le roi; laissons la qualité;
Sous les cotillons des grisettes
Peut loger autant de beauté,
Que sous les juppes des coquettes.'
Conte de Joconde.

[1] This passage appears to be the original of the French chanson, C'est l'amour, &c., and of the well-known song in *The Beggar's Opera.*

That from youre scole so devyaunt
I am, that never the more avaunt[1]
Right nought am I thurgh youre doctrine;
I dulle under your discipline;
I wote no more than I wist ever,
To me so contrarie and so fer
Is every thing that ye me lere;
And yit I can it alle parcuere.
Myne herte foryetith therof right nought,
It is so writen in my thought;
And depe greven it is so tendir
That alle by herte I can it rendre,
And rede it over comunely;
But to my silfe lewedist am I.[2]
'But sith ye love discreven so,
And lak and preise it bothe twoo,
Defyneth it into this letter,
That I may thenke on it the better,
For I herde never diffyned heere,
And wilfully I wolde it lere.'
Raisoun. 'If love be serched wel and sought
It is a sykenesse of the thought
Annexed and kned bitwixe tweyne,
With male and female, with oo cheyne,
So frely that byndith, that they nylle twynne,
Whether so therof they leese or wynne.
The roote springith thurgh hoote brennyng
Into disordinat desiryng,
For to kissen and enbrace
And at her lust them to solace.
Of other thyng love recchith nought,
But setteth her herte and alle her thought
More for delectacioun
Than ony procreacioun

[1] That is, 'I am never the further advanced.'
[2] That is, 'I know all your lesson by heart; but yet, so impossible do I find it to apply my learning to myself, that, as regards my own conduct, I am the most unlearned of men.'

Of other fruyt by engendrure;
Which love, to God is not plesure;
For of her body fruyt to gete
They yeve no force, they are so sette
Upon delite to pley in feere.
And somme have also this manere,
To feynen hem for love seke;
Sich love I preise not at a leke.
For paramours they do but feyne;
To love truly they disdeyne.
They falsen ladies traitoursly,
And swerne hem othes utterly,
With many a lesyng, and many a fable,
And alle they fynden deceyvable.
And whanne they han her lust geten
The hoote ernes they al foryeten.
Wymmen the harme they bien fulle sore;
But men this thenken evermore,
That lasse harme is, so mote I the,
Deceyve them, than deceyved be;[1]
And namely where they ne may
Fynde none other mene wey.
For I wote wel, in sothfastnesse,
That who doth now his bisynesse
With ony womman for to dele,
For ony lust that he may fele,
But if it be for engendrure,
He doth trespasse, I you ensure.
For he shulde setten alle his wille
To geten a likly thyng hym tille,
And to sustene, if he myght,
And kepe forth, by Kyndes right,
His owne lyknesse and semblable.
For bycause alle is corumpable,[2]

[1] In some copies of the original follows a long passage, which M. Méon rejects as an interpolation.

[2] This line is omitted in the MS. It is supplied from Speght.
Por ce que tuit sunt corrumpable.'

And faile shulde successioun,
Ne were ther generacioun,
Oure sectis strene[1] for to save,
Whanne fader or moder arn in grave,
Her children shulde, whanne they ben deede,
Fulle diligent ben, in her steede,
To use that werke on such a wise,
That oon may thurgh another rise.
Therfore sette Kynde therynne delite,
For men therynne shulde hem delite,
And of that deede be not erke,
But ofte sithes haunt that werke.
For noon wolde drawe therof a draught
Ne were delite, which hath hym kaught.
This hadde sotille dame Nature;
For noon goth right, I thee ensure,
Ne hath entent hool ne parfight,
For her desir is for delyte,
The which fortened crece and eke
The pley of love, for ofte seke,[2]
And thralle hem silf they be so nyce
Unto the prince of every vice.[3]
For of ech synne it is the rote
Unlefulle lust, though it be sote,
And of alle yvelle the racyne,
As Tulius can determyne,[4]
Which in his tyme was fulle sage,
In a boke he made of age,
Where that more he preyseth Eelde
Though he be croked and unweelde,

---

[1] 'Oure sectis strene' means the seed, or race, of our species.

[2] This couplet is evidently corrupt and unintelligible. The original is:—

'Car cil qui va delit querant,
Sés-tu qu'il se fait? il se rent
Comme sers, et chétis et nices
Au prince de tretous les vices.'

[3] The MS. reads *wise*.

[4] Cicero *de Senectute*.

And more of commendacioun,
Than youthe in his discripcioun.
For youthe sette bothe mán and wyf
In alle perelle of soule and lyf;
And perelle is, but men have grace,
The perelle of yougth for to pace,
Withoute ony deth or distresse,
It is so fulle of wyldnesse;
So ofte it doth shame and damage
To hym or to his lynage.
It ledith man now up now doun
In mochel dissolucioun,
And makith hym love yvelle companye,
And lede his lyf disrewlilye,
And halt hym payed with noon estate.[1]
Withynne hym silf is such debate,
He chaungith purpos and entente,
And yalte into somme convente,
To lyven aftir her emprise,
And lesith fredom and fraunchise,
That Nature in hym hadde sette,
The which ageyne he may not gette,
If he there make his mansioun,
For to abide professioun.[2]
Though for a tyme his herte absente,
It may not fayle, he shal repente,
And eke abide thilke day,[3]
To leve his abite, and gone his way,
And lesith his worshippe and his name,
And dar not come ageyn for shame,

[1] That is, 'Holdeth himself content with no situation in which he may be placed.'

[2] That is, 'If he there remains, and waits till he makes his profession, or takes the vows.'

[3] Ou s'il resent trop grief le fés
Si s'en repent et puis s'en ist
Ou sa vie espoir i fenist,
Qu'il ne s'en ose revenir
Por honte qui li fait tenir
Et contre son cuer i demore.

But al his lyf he doth so morne,
Bycause he dar not hom retourne.
Fredom of kynde so lost hath he
That never may recured be,
But that if God hym graunte grace
That he may, er he hennes pace,
Conteyne undir obedience
Thurgh the vertu of pacience.[1]
For youthe set man in alle folye,
In unthrift and in ribaudie,
In leecherie, and in outrage,
So ofte it chaungith of corage.
Youthe gynneth ofte siche bargeyne,
That may not eende withouten peyne.
In gret perelle is sett youthede,
Delite so doth his bridil leede.
Delite thus hangith, drede thee nought,
Bothe mannys body and his thought,
Oonly thurgh youthe, his chamberere,[2]
That to done yvelle is custommere,
And of nought elles taketh hede,
But oonly folkes for to lede
Into disporte and wyldenesse,
So is he frowarde from sadnesse.[3]
But eelde drawith hem therfro;
Who wote it nought, he may wel goo,

---

[1] The danger of taking religious vows, which may afterwards be repented of, forms the subject of one of the colloquies of Erasmus, called *Virgo mempsigamos*.

[2] In the MS. this passage stands thus:—

'Delight this hangith, drede thee nought,
Bothe mannys body and his thought,
Oonly thurgh youthes chambre.'

This is consonant neither with sense nor metre. We are fortunately able to correct it by the original:—

'Ainsinc délit enlace et maine
Les cors et la pensée humaine
Par jonesce sa chamberiere.'

[3] That is, 'So far does he wander wilfully from seriousness.'

And moo of hem that now arn olde,
That whilom youthe hadde in holde,
Which yit remembreth of tendir age
Hou it hem brought in many a rage,
And many a foly therynne wrought.
But now that Eelde hath hym thurgh sought
They repente hem of her folye,
That youthe hem putte in jupardye,
In perelle and in mych woo,
And made hem ofte amys to do,
And suen yvelle companye
Riot and avoutrie.
'But Eelde gan ageyn restreyne
From sich foly, and refreyne,
And sette men, by her ordinaunce,
In good reule and in governaunce.
But yvelle she spendith hir servise,
For no man wole hir love, neither preise;
She is hated, this wote I welle.
Hir acqueyntaunce wolde no man fele,
Ne han of Elde companye,
Men hate to be of hir alye.
For no man wolde bicomen olde,
Ne dye, whanne he is yong and bolde.
And Eelde merveilith right gretlye,
Whanne they remembre hem inwardly
Of many a perelous emprise,
Whiche that they wrought in sondry wise,
Hou evere they myght, withoute blame,
Escape awey withoute shame,
In youthe withoute damage
Or repreef of her lynage,
Losse of membre, shedyng of blode,
Perelle of deth, or losse of good.
'Woste thou nought where Youthe abit,
That men so preisen in her witt?
With Delite she halt sojour,
For bothe they dwellen in oo tour.

As longe as Youthe is in sesoun,
They dwellen in oon mansioun.
Delite of Youthe wole have servise
To do what so he wole devise;
And Youthe is redy evermore
For to obey, for smerte or sore,
Unto Delite, and hym to yeve
Hir servise, while that she may lyve.
'Where Elde abit, I wole thee telle
Shortly, and no while dwelle,
For thidder byhoveth thee to goo.
If Deth in youthe thee not sloo,
Of this journey thou maist not faile.
With hir Labour and Travaile
Logged ben with Sorwe and Woo,
That never out of hir court goo.
Peyne and Distresse, Syknesse, and Ire,
And Malencoly, that angry sire,
Ben of hir paleys senatours.
Gronyng and Grucchyng, hir herbejeours,
The day and nyght, hir to turment,
With cruel Deth they hir present,
And tellen hir, erliche and late,
That Deth stondith armed at hir gate.[1]
Thanne brynge they to hir remembraunce
The foly dedis of hir infaunce,
Which causen hir to mourne in woo
That Youthe hath hir bigiled so,
Which sodeynly awey is hasted.
She wepeth the tyme that she hath wasted,

[1] *Herbejeours* means *maîtres d'hôtel*, the officers who announce and provide lodgings for the guests. They are finely represented as continually informing her that Death is standing armed at the gate, desiring admittance. This grand image is Chaucer's own conception; the original is comparatively tame:—

'Travail et Dolor là herbergent;
Mes ils la tient et enfergent,
Et tant la batent et tormentent,
Que mort prochaine li presentent.'

Compleynyng of the preterit,
And the present, that not abit,
And of hir olde vanite,
That but aforn hir she may see
In the future some socour,
To leggen hir of hir dolour,
To graunt hir tyme of repentaunce,
For hir synnes to do penaunce,
And atte the laste so hir governe
To wynne the joy that is eterne,
Fro which go bakward Youthe her made
In vanite to droune and wade.
For present tyme abidith nought,
It is more swift than any thought;
So litel while it doth endure
That ther nys compte ne mesure.[1]
'But hou that evere the game go
Who list to love joie and mirth also
Of love, be it he or she,
High or lowe who it be,
In fruyt[2] they shulde hem delyte,
Her part they may not elles quyte,
To save hem silf in honeste.
And yit fulle many one I se
Of wymmen, sothly for to seyne,
That desire and wolde fayne
The pley of love, they be so wilde,
And not coveite to go with childe.
And if with child they be perchaunce,
They wole it holde a gret myschaunce,
But whatsomever woo they fele,
They wole not pleyne, but concele;
But if it be ony fool or nyce,
In whom that shame hath no justice.

[1] With this symbolical picture of Eld may be compared that of Buckhurst in the Induction.—See *Poet. Works of Surrey and others.* Annot. Ed., p. 276.

[2] That is, Progeny.

For to delyte echone they drawe,
That haunte this werke, bothe high and lawe,
Save sich that arn worth right nought,
That for money wole be bought.
Such love I preise in no wise,
Whanne it is goven for coveitise.
I preise no womman, though so[1] be wood,
That yeveth hir silf for ony good.
For litel sholde a man telle
Of hir, that wolle hir body selle,
Be she mayde, be she wyf,
That quyk wole selle hir bi hir lyf.
How faire chere that evere she make,
He is a wrecche I undirtake
That loved such one, for swete or soure,
Though she hym calle hir paramoure,
And laugheth on hym, and makith hym feeste.
For certeynly no such beeste
To be loved is not worthy,
Or bere the name of drurie.[2]
Noon shulde hir please, but he were woode,
That wole dispoile hym of his goode.

---

[1] *So* is the Anglo-Saxon *heo*, she, with a hissing aspirate. In Yorkshire, *she* is still pronounced *sheo* by the vulgar.

[2] *Druerie* means sometimes courtship, gallantry.—See vol. iii. p. 125. Here it means a mistress. The original is, 'Ne doit estre amie clamée. The following description of a *Drut*, or lover, by Guillem Aesmar, a Provençal poet, curiously illustrates many of the sentiments contained in the poem :—

'Ben paoc ama *drut* qi non es gelos,
'Et paoc ama qi non est airos,
Et paoc ama qi non est folettis,
Et paoc ama qi non fa tracios;
Mais vaut d'amor qi ben est enveios
Un dolz plorar non fait qatorze ris.

Quant en li quier merce eu genoillos,
E la mi colpa et mi met ochaisos,
Et l'aigua m cur aval per mer lo vés,
Et ela m fai un regard amoros,
Et en li bais la bucha els ols amdos
Adonc mi par un joi de paradis.'—MS. Crofts ccxviii.

Yit nevertheles I wole not sey
That she, for solace and for pley,
May a jewel or other thyng
Take of her loves fre yevyng;
But that she aske it in no wise,
For drede of shame or coveitise.
And she of hirs may hym, certeyne,
Withoute sclaundre, yeven ageyn,
And joyne her hertes togidre so
In love, and take and yeve also.
Trowe not that I wolde hem twynne,
Whanne in her love ther is no synne;
I wole that they togedre go,
And done al that they han ado,
As curteis shulde and debonaire,
And in her love beren hem faire,
Withoute vice, bothe he and she;
So that alwey in honeste,
Fro foly Love to kepe hem clere
That brenneth hertis with his fere;
And that her love, in ony wise,
Be devoide of coveitise.
Good love shulde engendrid be
Of trew herte, just, and secre,
And not of such as sette her thought
To have her lust, and ellis nought,
So are they caught in Loves lace,
Truly, for bodily solace.
Fleshly delite is so present
With thee, that sette alle thyne entent,
Withoute more (what shulde I glose?)
For to gette and have the rose,
Which makith thee so mate and woode
That thou desirest noon other goode.
But thou art not an inche the nerre,
But evere abidst in sorwe and werre,
As in thi face it is sene;
It makith thee bothe pale and lene,

Thy myght, thi vertu goth away.
A sory geste in goode fay,
Thou herberest then in thyne inne,
The God of Love whanne thou let inne!
Wherfore I rede thou shette hym oute,
Or he shalle greve thee, oute of doute;
For to thi profight it wole turne,
If he nomore with thee sojourne.
In gret myscheef and sorwe sonken
Ben hertis, that of love arn dronken,
As thou peraventure knowen shalle,
Whanne thou hast lost the tyme alle,
And spent thy thought in ydilnesse,
In waste, and wofulle lustynesse;
If thou maist lyve the tyme to se
Of love for to delyvered be,
Thy tyme thou shalt biwepe sore
The whiche never thou maist restore.
(For tyme lost, as men may see,
For no thyng may recured be)
And if thou scape, yit atte laste,
Fro Love that hath thee so faste
Knytt and bounden in his lace,
Certeyn I holde it but a grace.
For many oon, as it is seyne,
Have lost, and spent also in veyne,
In his servise withoute socour,
Body and soule, good, and tresour,
Witte, and strengthe, and eke richesse,
'Of which they hadde never redresse.'
Thus taught and preched hath Resoun,
But Love spilte hir sermoun,
That was so ymped[1] in my thought,
That hir doctrine I sette at nought.

[1] This is a metaphor from falconry. When the wing or tail feather of a hawk is accidentally broken, so that her flight might be impeded, it is spliced with another feather of the same sort by means of a needle, one end of which is driven into the stump, and the other into the new

And yit ne seide she never a dele,
That I ne understode it wele,
Word by word the mater alle.
But unto Love I was so thralle,
Which callith over alle his pray,
He chasith so my thought ay,
And holdith myne herte undir his sele,
As trust and trew as ony stele;
So that no devocioun
Ne hadde I in the sermoun
Of dame Resoun; ne of hir rede
I toke no sojour in myne hede.
For alle yede oute at oon ere
That in that other she dide lere;
Fully on me she lost hir lore.
Hir speche me greved wondir sore,
That unto hir for ire I seide,
For anger, as I dide abraide:—
'Dame, and is it youre wille algate,
That I not love, but that I hate
Alle men, as ye me teche?
For if I do aftir youre speche,
Sith that ye seyne love is not good,
Thanne must I nedis say with mood
If I it leve, in hatrede ay
Lyven, and voide love away,
From me a synfulle wrecche,
Hated of all that tecche.'[1]
I may not go noon other gate,
For other must I love or hate.
And if I hate men of newe,
More than love it wole me rewe,

---

feather. This is called *imping*. The poet says that love was so closely united to his thought as the feather which has been imped, or united, with the new part.

[1] This line is evidently corrupt. The original is:—

'Lors si serrai mortel pechierres
Voire par Dieu peres que lierres.'

As by youre preching semeth me,
For Love no thyng preisith thee.[1]
Ye yeve good counseile, sikirly,
That prechith me al day, that I
Shulde not Loves lore alowe;
He were a foole wolde you not trowe![2]
In speche also ye han me taught,
Another love that knowen is naught,
Which I have herd you not repreve,
To love ech other, by youre leve.
If ye wolde diffyne it me,
I wolde gladly here, to se,
Atte the leest, if I may lere
Of sondry loves the manere.'
Raison. 'Certis, freend, a fool art thou
Whan that thou no thyng wolt allowe,[3]
That I for thi profit say.
Yit wole I sey thee more, in fay,
For I am redy, at the leste,
To accomplisshe thy requeste,
But I not where[4] it wole avayle;
In veyne peraunture I shal travayle.
Love ther is in sondry wise,
As I shal thee heere devise.
For somme love leful is and good;
I mene not that which makith thee wood,
And bringith thee in many a fitte,
And ravysshith fro thee all thi witte,
It is so merveilouse and queynte;
With such love be more aquente.'

[1] L'Amant means that just as Reason blames Love, Love blames Reason; and that, therefore, he would probably suffer just as much by following one as the other.

[2] Sir Harris Nicolas places a note of interrogation at the end of this line, which makes it unintelligible. It is ironical, and means, 'He who would not believe you would be a fool.' The omission of the relative pronoun is a common ellipsis.

[3] *Allowe* means to approve. It is used in this sense in the English translation of the Psalms. 'The Lord *alloweth* the righteous.'

[4] *Where* here means *whether*.

COMMENT RAISOUN DIFFINIST AUNSETE.

Love of freendshippe also ther is,
Which makith no man done amys,
Of wille knytt bitwixe two,
That wole not breke for wele ne woo;
Which long is likly to contune,
Whanne wille and goodis ben in comune,
Grounded by Goddis ordinaunce,
Hoole withoute discordaunce;
With hem holdyng comunte
Of alle her goode in charite,
That ther be noon excepcioun,
Thurgh chaungyng of ententioun,
That ech helpe other at her neede,
And wisely hele bothe worde and dede,
Trewe of menyng, devoide of slouthe,
For witte is nought withoute trouthe;
So that the ton dar alle his thought
Seyn to his freend, and spare nought,
As to hymsilf without dredyng
To be discovered by wreying.
For glad is that conjúnccioun,
Whanne ther is noon suspecioun;
Whom they wolde prove[1]
That trew and parfit weren in love.
For no man may be amyable,
But if he be so ferme and stable,
That fortune chaunge hym not, ne blynde,
But that his freend allewey hym fynde,
Bothe pore and riche, in oo state.
For if his freend, thurgh ony gate,
Wole compleyne of his poverte,
He shulde not bide so long, til he

[1] This line is evidently corrupt, nor does the original enable us to suggest the true reading:—

'Tiex mors avoir doivent et seulent
Qui parfetement amer veulent.'

Of his helpyng hym requere;
For goode dede done thurgh praiere
Is sold, and bought to dere, iwys,
To hert that of grete valour is.
For hert fulfilled of gentilnesse,
Can yvel demene his distresse.
And man that worthy is of name,
To axen often hath gret shame.
A good man brenneth in his thought
For shame, whanne he axeth ought.
He hath gret thought, and dredith ay
For his disese, whanne he shal pray
His freend, lest that he warned be,
Til that he preve his stabilite.
But whanne that he hath founden oon
That trusty is and trew as stone,
And assaied hym at alle,
And founde hym stedefast as a walle,
And of his freendshippe be certeyne,
He shal hym shewe bothe joye and peyne,
And alle that he dar thynke or sey,
Withoute shame, as he wel may.
For how shulde he ashamed be,
Of sich one as I tolde thee?
For whanne he woot his secre thought,
The thridde shal knowe therof right nought;
For tweyne in nombre is bet than thre,
In every counselle and secre.
Repreve he dreded never a deele,
Who that bisett his wordis wele;
For every wise man, out of drede,
Can kepe his tunge til he se nede;
And fooles can not holde her tunge;
A fooles belle is soone runge.[1]
Yit shal a trew freend do more
To helpe his felowe of his sore,

[1] A proverbial expression, like 'A fool's bolt is soon shot,' meaning that a fool soon publishes all he knows.

And socoure hym, whanne he hath neede,
In alle that he may done in deede;
And gladder be that he hym plesith
Than his felowe that he esith.
And if he do not his requeste,
He shal as mochel hym moleste[1]
As his felow, for that he
May not fulfille his volunte
Fully, as he hath requered.
If bothe the hertis Love hath fered,
Joy and woo they shulle departe,
And take evenly ech his parte.
Half his anoy he shal have ay,
And comfort, what that he may;
And of this blisse parte shal he,
If love wole departed be.
And whilom of this unyte
Spak Tulius in a ditee;[2]
And shulde maken his requeste
Unto his freend, that is honeste;
And he goodly shulde it fulfille,
But it the more were out of skile,
And otherwise not graunt therto,
Except oonly in cause twoo.[3]
If men his freend to deth wolde drive
Late hym be bisy to save his lyve.
Also if men wolen hym assayle,
Of his wurshippe to make hym faile,
And hyndren hym of his renoun,
Late hym, with fulle entencioun,

[1] That is, 'He shall vex himself as much as his friend is vexed, because he cannot grant his friend's request.'

[2] Cicero *de Amicitiâ*. Quod justum est petito, &c.

[3] The meaning is, that a friend is bound to assist his friend in any just and reasonable cause, except only in two cases, and then he is bound to assist him even though his cause be unjust; and these two cases are, when his life or his good name are in danger. All considerations of justice yield to the paramount obligation of protecting his life and honour.

His dever[1] done in eche degre
That his freend ne shamed be,
In this two caas with his myght,
Taking no kepe to skile nor right,
As ferre as love may hym excuse;
This ought no man to refuse.
This love that I have tolde to thee
Is no thing contrarie to me;
This wole I that thou folowe wele,
And leve the tother everydele.
This love to vertu alle attendith,
The tothir fooles blent[2] and shendith.
'Another love also there is,
That is contrarie unto this,
Which desire is so constreyned
That it is but wille feyned;[3]
Awey fro trouthe it doth so varie
That to good love it is contrarie;
For it maymeth, in many wise,
Sike hertis with coveitise;
Alle in wynnyng and in profit,
Sich love settith his delite.
This love so hangeth in balaunce
That if it lese his hope, perchaunce,
Of lucre, that he is sett upon,
It wole faile, and quenche anoon;
For no man may be amerous,
Ne in his lyvyng vertuous,

[1] *Dever* here means *endeavour*. To do one's endeavour is still a common phrase among the Irish peasantry, whose vulgarisms often turn out to be the old forms introduced by the different bodies of English colonists who settled there from time to time.

[2] *Blent* is the contracted form of *blendeth*, or blindeth. The two forms are used indifferently, as appears by this line, where *shendeth*, the uncontracted form, occurs. The contracted form would be *shent*.

[3] The original is:—

'C'est fainte volenté d'amer
En cuer malades du meshaing
De covoitise de gaaing.'

But he love more, in moode,
Men[1] for hem̃ silf than for her goode.
For love that profit doth abide,
Is fals, and bit[2] not in no tyde.
Love cometh of dame Fortune,
That litel while wole contune,
For it shal chaungen wonder soone,
And take eclips right as the moone,
Whanne he[3] is from us lett
Thurgh erthe, that bitwixe is sett
The sonne and hir, as it may falle,
Be it in partie, or in alle;[4]
The shadowe maketh her bemys merke,
And hir hornes to shewe derke,
That part where she hath lost hir[5] lyght
Of Phebus fully, and the sight;
Til whanne the shadowe is over past,
She is enlumyned ageyn as faste,
Thurgh the brightnesse of the sonne bemes
That yeveth to hir ageyne hir lemes.
That love is right of sich nature;
Now is faire, and now obscure,
Now bright, now clipsi of manere,
And whilom dymme, and whilom clere.
As soone as Poverte gynneth take,
With mantel and wedis blake
Hidith of Love the light awey,
That into nyght it turneth day;
It may not see Richesse shyne,
Tille the blak shadowes fyne.

---

[1] *Men* here means man or woman, like *homo*, in Latin

[2] *Bit* is the contracted form of *bideth*.

[3] There is some confusion here in the gender attributed to the moon, the personal pronoun *he* referring to her in one place, and *her* in another. In old English the moon is always masculine, as in Anglo-Saxon and German.

[4] That is, 'Whether the eclipse be partial or total.'

[5] *Hir* appears to be a mistake of the copyist for *the*.

For, whanne Richesse shyneth bright,
Love recovereth ageyn his light;
And whanne it failith, he wole flit,
And as she greveth, so greveth it.
Of this love here what I sey:—
The riche men are loved ay,
And namely tho that sparand bene,
That wole not wasshe her hertes clene
Of the filthe, nor of the vice
Of gredy brennyng avarice.
The riche man fulle fonned is, ywys,
That weneth that he loved is.
If that his herte it undirstode,
It is not he; it is his goode.
He may wel witen in his thought,
His good is loved, and he right nought.
For if he be a nygard eke,
Men wole not sette by hym a leke,
But haten hym; this is the sothe.
Lo, what profit his catel[1] doth!
Of every man that may hym see,
It geteth hym nought but enmyte.
But he amende hym silf of that vice,
And knowe hym silf, he is not wys.
Certys he shulde ay freendly be,
To gete hym love also ben free,
Or ellis he is not wise ne sage
No more than is a gote ramage.[2]
That he not loveth his dede proveth,
Whan he his richesse so wel loveth,
That he wole hide it ay, and spare,
His pore freendis sene forfare,

---

[1] *Catel* means chattels, property.

[2] The propriety of this simile is not apparent. A wild goat (gote ramage) is rather a cunning animal. The passage in the original is:—

'En ce cas n'est il mie sages,
Ne qu'ils est uns biaus cers ramages.'

To kepen ay his purpose,
Til for drede his iyen close,
And til a wikked deth hym take;
Hym hadde lever asondre shake,
And late alle hise lymes asondre ryve,
Than leve his richesse in hys lyve.
He thenkith parte it with no man;
Certayn no love is in hym than.
How shulde love withynne hym be,
Whanne in his herte is no pite?
That he trespasseth wel I wote,
For ech man knowith his estate;
For wel hym ought to be reproved
That loveth nought, ne is not loved.
'But sith we arn to Fortune comen,
And hath oure sermoun of hir nomen,
A wondir wille I telle thee nowe,
Thou herdist never sich oon, I trowe.
I note where thou me leven shalle,
Though sothfastnesse it be alle,
As it is writen, and is soth,
That unto men more profit doth
The froward Fortune and contraire,
Than the swote and debonaire:
And if thee thynke[1] it is doutable,
It is thurgh argument provable.
For the debonaire and softe
Falsith and bigilith ofte;
For lyche a moder she can cherishe
And mylken as doth a norys,
And of hir goode to hym deles
And yeveth hym parte of her joweles,
With grete richesse and dignite,
And hem she hoteth stabilite,

---

[1] That is, 'If it seems to thee doubtful.' *Thynke* is the Anglo-Saxon *thinkan*, to seem.

In a state that is not stable,
But chaungynge ay and variable;
And fedith hym with glorie veyne,[1]
And worldly blisse non certeyne.
Whanne she hym settith on hir whele,
Thanne wene they to be right wele,
And in so stable state withalle,
That never they wene for to falle.
And whanne they sette so high be,
They wene to have in certeynte
Of hertly freendis so grete noumbre,
That no thyng myght her state encombre;
They trust hem so on every side,
Wenyng with hym they wolde abide,
In every perelle and myschaunce,
Withoute chaunge or variaunce,
Bothe of catelle and of goode;
And also for hem to spende her bloode,
And alle her membris for to spille,
Oonly to fulfille her wille.
They maken it hole in many wise,[2]
And hoten hem her fulle servise,
How sore that it do hem smerte;
Into her very naked sherte,
Herte and alle, so hole they yeve,
For the tyme that they may lyve,
So that with her flaterie,
They maken foolis glorifie
Of her wordis spekyng,
And han cheer of a rejoysyng,
And trowe hem as the Evangile;
And it is alle falsheede and gile,
As they shal aftirward se,
Whanne they arn falle in poverte,

[1] The MS. reads *glorie and veyne*, which is a mere clerical error.
[2] The original is:—

'Et que por seignors ne les tiengnent.'

For *it hole* we ought perhaps to read *hem lordes*.

And ben of good and catelle bare;
Thanne shulde they sene who freendis ware.
For of an hundred certeynly,
Nor of a thousande fulle scarsly,
Ne shal they fynde unnethis oon,
Whanne poverte is comen upon.[1]
For thus Fortune that I of telle,
With men whanne hir lust to dwelle,
Makith men to leese her conisaunce,
And nourishith hem in ignoraunce.

'But froward Fortune and perverse,
Whanne high estatis she doth reverse,
And maketh hem to tumble doune
Off hir[2] whele, with sodeyn tourne,
And from her richesse doth hem flie,
And plongeth hem in poverte,
As a stepmoder envyous,
And leieth a plastre dolorous
Unto her hertis wounded egre,
Which is not tempred with vynegre,
But with poverte and indigence,
For to shewe by experience,
That she is Fortune verelye
In whom no man shulde affye,
Nor in hir yeftis have fiaunce,
She is so fulle of variaunce.
Thus kan she maken high and lowe,
Whanne they from richesse arn throwe,
Fully to knowen, without were,
Freend of affect, and freend of chere;[3]

---

[1] This is the theme of *Timon of Athens*.

[2] The MS. reads *Or with hir*, which makes the passage nonsense; the reading of Speght is therefore adopted in the text. It is supported by the original:—

'Més la contraire et la perverse
Quant de lor grant estats les verse,
Et les tumbe autor de sa roë
Du sommet envers en la boë.'

[3] That is, 'Friend in reality, and friend in appearance only.'

And which in love weren trew and stable,
And whiche also weren variable,
After Fortune her goddes,
In poverte, outher in richesse;
For alle that bereveth, out of drede,
Unhappe berèveth it in dede;
For Infortune late not oon
Of freendis, whanne Fortune is gone;
I mene tho freendis that wole fle
Afloon as entreth poverte.
And yit they wole not leve hem so,
But in ech place where they go
They calle hem 'wreçche,' scorne and blame,
And of her myshappe hem diffame,
And, namely, siche as in richesse,
Pretendith moost of stablenesse,
Whanne that they sawe hym sett on lofte,
And weren of hym socoured ofte,
And most iholpe in alle her neede:
But now they take no maner heede,
But seyn in voice of flaterie,
That now apperith her folye,
Over alle where so they fare,
And synge, Go, farewell feldfare.[1]
Alle suche freendis I beshrewe,
For of trewe ther be to fewe;
But sothfast freendis, what so bitide,
In every fortune wolen abide;
Thei han her hertis in suche noblesse
That they nyl love for no richesse,
Nor for that Fortune may hem sende
Thei wolen hem socoure and defende,
And chaunge for softe ne for sore.
For who his freend loveth evermore
Though men drawe swerde his freend to slo,
He may not hewe her love a-two.

[1] There is nothing in the original which answers to this proverb.—See vol. v. p. 145, note 2.

But in case that I shalle sey,
For pride and ire lese it he may,
And for reprove by nycete,
And discovering of privite,
With tonge woundyng, as feloun,
Thurgh venemous detraccioun.
Frende in this case wole gone his way,
For no thyng greve hym more ne may,
And for nought ellis wole he fle,
If that he love in stabilite.[1]
And certeyn he is wel bigone
Among a thousand that fyndith oon.[2]
For ther may be no richesse
Ageyns frendshippe of worthynesse,
For it ne may so high atteigne,
As may the valoure,[3] sothe to seyne,
Of hym that loveth trew and welle;
Frendshippe is more than is catelle.
For freend in court ay better is
Than peny in purs, certis;[4]
And Fortune myshappyng,
Whanne upon men she is fablyng,
Thurgh mysturnyng of hir chaunce,
And caste hem oute of balaunce,
She makith, thurgh her adversite,
Men fulle clerly for to se
Hym that is freend in existence
From hym that is by apparence.
For ynfortune makith anoon,
To knowe thy freendis fro thy foon,

[1] This appears to be taken from Ecclus. xxii. 26: 'To a friend if thou hast opened a sad mouth, fear not, for there may be a reconciliation; except upbraiding, and reproach, and pride, and disclosing of secrets, or a treacherous wound; for in all these cases a friend will flee away.'

[2] Eccles. vii. 29.

[3] *Valeur*, value. Valour is still used in this, its primary sense, by the vulgar in Norfolk.

[4] This is an old proverb. Justice Shallow says:—'Yes, Davy, I will use him well; a friend i' the court is better than a penny in purse.' —*Henry IV.*, Act v. sc. 1.

By experience, right as it is.
The which is more to preise, ywis,
Than in myche richesse and tresour,
For more depe profit and valour,
Poverte, and such adversite
Bifore, than doth prosperite;
For the toon yeveth conysaunce,
And the tother ignoraunce.
'And thus in poverte is in dede
Trouthe declared fro falsehede,
For feyne frendis it wole declare,
And trewe also, what wey they fare.
For whanne he was in his richesse,
These freendis, ful of doublenesse
Offrid hym in many wise
Hert and body, and servise.
What wolde he thanne ha yeve to ha bought,[1]
To knowen openly her thought,
That he now hath so clerly seen?
The lasse bigiled he sholde have bene,
And he hadde thanne perceyved it,
But richesse nold not late hym witte.
Wel more avauntage doth hym thanne,
Sith that it makith hym a wise man,
The gret myscheef that he perceyveth,
Than doth richesse that hym deceyveth.
Richesse riche ne makith nought
Hym that on tresour sette his thought;
For richesse stonte in suffisaunce,
And no thyng in habundaunce;[2]
For suffisaunce alle oonly
Makith men to lyve richely.

---

[1] The original is:—

'Que vosist-il acheter lores
Qu'il en séust ce qu'il set ores?'

By this we are enabled to correct the MS., which reads *yow*, instead of *yeve*.

[2] The meaning is, that true riches consists in having enough, and not more than enough.

For he that hath myches tweyne,
Ne value in his demeigne,
Lyveth more at ese, and more is riche,
Than doth he that is chiche,
And in his berne hath soth to seyn,
An hundred mavis[1] of whete greyne,
Though he be chapman or marchaunte,
And have of golde many besaunte.
For in getyng he hath such woo,
And in the kepyng drede also,
And sette evermore his bisynesse
For to encrese, and not to lesse,
For to aument and multiplie.
And though on hepis that lye hym bye,
Yit never shal make his richesse,
Asseth[2] unto his gredynesse.
But the povre that recchith nought,
Save of his lyflode, in his thought,
Which that he getith with his travaile,
He dredith nought that it shalle faile,
Though he have lytel worldis goode,
Mete and drynke, and esy foode,
Upon his travel and lyvyng,
And also suffisaunt clothyng.
Or if in syknesse that he falle,
And lothe mete and drynke withalle,

---

[1] A *myche* is a manchet, or loaf of fine bread. *Mavis* is probably a mistake for *muis*, or *muid*, a French measure containing somewhat more than five quarters English. The original is:—

'Car tex n'a pas vaillant deus miches,
Qui est plus aése et plus riches
Que tex à cent muis de froment.'

[2] *Asseth* is from the French *assez*. It occurs in *The Visions of Piers Ploughman*:—

'And if it suffice not for asseth.'

The whole of this dissertation on covetousness, like most of the philosophy in this poem, is copied from Boëthius. Chaucer thus translates the last clause:—'Then may not riches maken that a man nis nedy, ne that he be sufficient to himself,' &c.—*De Consol. Phil.* iii.

Though he have not his mete to bye,[1]
He shal bithynke hym hastly,
To putte hym oute of all daunger,
That he of mete hath no myster;
Or that he may with lytel eke
Be founden, while that he is seke;
Or that men shulle hym berne in haste,
To lyve, til his syknesse be paste,
To somme maysondewe[2] biside;
He caste nought what shal hym bitide.
He thenkith nought that evere he shalle
Into ony syknesse falle.
'And though it falle, as it may be,
That alle betyme spare shalle he[3]
As mochel as shal to hym suffice,
While he is sike in ony wise,
He doth for that he wole be
Contente with his poverte
Withoute nede of ony man.
So myche in litel have he can,
He is apaied with his fortune;
And for he nyl be importune
Unto no wight,[4] ne honerous,
Nor of her goodes coveitous;
Therfore he spareth, it may wel bene,
His pore estate for to sustene.
'Or if hym lust not for to spare,
But suffrith forth, as not ne ware,
Atte last it hapneth, as it may,
Right unto his last day,

---

[1] *Wherewithal* is understood; thus, 'Though he have not wherewithal to buy his meat.'

[2] Maison-dieu, an hospital. This name is founded on the sublime morality of our Lord's sentence, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it [a work of mercy] unto the least of these my brethren [the poor], ye have done it unto Me.' The house in which the poor were lodged and clothed and fed was called the House of God, or Maison-Dieu, inasmuch as He had declared that the poor represented Him.

[3] This line has been erased in the MS., and filled up by a later hand.

[4] The MS. reads *witte*, a mere clerical error.

And take the world as it wolde be;
For evere in herte thenkith he
The sonner that Deth hym slo,
To paradys the sonner go
He shal, there for to lyve in blisse,
Where that he shal no good misse.
Thider he hopith God shal hym sende,
Aftir his wrecchid lyves ende.
Pictigoras hymsilf reherses,
In a book that the Golden Verses[1]
Is clepid, for the nobilite
Of the honourable ditee:—
Thanne whanne thou goste thy body fro,
Fre in the eir thou shalt up go,
And leven alle humanite,
And purely lyve in deite,
He is a foole withouten were
That trowith have his countre heere.
In erthe is not oure countre,
That may these clerkis seyn and seye
In Boice of Consolacioun,[2]
Where it is maked mencioun
Of oure countre pleyn at the eye,
By teching of philosophie,
Where lewid men myght lere witte,
Who so that wolde translaten it.
If he be sich that can wel lyve
Aftir his rent may hym yeve,[3]
And not desireth more to have,
That may fro poverte hym save.

[1] The person intended is, of course, Pythagoras. The golden verses of Pythagoras are seventy-one in number, and are said to have been composed, as a summary of his doctrines, by Lysis, one of his disciples. Hierocles, an athlete, who became a philosopher, wrote a Commentary upon them.

[2] Sunt enim pennæ volucres mihi,
Quæ celsa conscendant poli.
BOETH. *de Con. Phil.* iv., met. i.

[3] That is, 'If he be such a one as can live according to what his income will admit of.'

A wise man seide, as we may seen,
Is no man wrecched, but he it wene,
Be he kyng, knyght, or ribaude.[1]
And many a ribaude is mery and baude,
That swynkith, and berith, bothe day and nyght,
Many a burthen of gret myght,
The whiche doth hym lasse offense,
For he suffrith in pacience.
They laugh and daunce, trippe and synge,
And ley not up for her lyvyng,
But in the taverne alle dispendith
The wynnyng that God hem sendith.
Thanne goth he fardeles for to bere,[2]
With as good chere as he dide ere,
To swynke and traveile he not feyntith,[3]
For for to robben he disdeyntith;
But right anoon, aftir his swynke,
He goth to taverne for to drynke.
Alle these ar riche in abundaunce,
That can thus have suffisaunce
Wel more than can an usurere,
As God wel knowith, withoute were.
For an usurer, so God me se,
Shal nevere for richesse riche bee,
But evermore pore and indigent,
Scarce, and gredy in his entent.
'For soth it is, whom it displese,
Ther may no marchaunt lyve at ese,
His herte in sich a were[4] is sett,
That it quyk brenneth to gette,

[1] *Ribaude* here means simply a poor man.

[2] Who would fardels bear
To grunt and sweat under a weary life.—*Hamlet.*

[3] Speght reads *faineth*, which was probably an emendation of the copyist, to accommodate the rhyme, without introducing a *t* into *disdeyneth*. The original does not give us any help in choosing between them.

[4] The MS. reads *where*, a mistake of the copyist for *were*, which is a translation of *guerre*, and means confusion, or war. The original is:—

'Car son cuer a mis en tel guerre.'

Ne never shal, though he hath geten,
Though he have gold in gerners yeten,
For to be nedy he dredith sore.
Wherfore to geten more and more
He sette his herte and his desire;
So hote he brennyth in the fire
Of coveitise, that makith hym woode
To purchase other mennes goode.
He undirfongith a gret peyne,
That undirtakith to drynke up Seyne;
For the more he drynkith, ay
The more he leveth, the soth to say.
Thus is thurst of fals getyng,
That laste ever in coveityng,
And the angwisshe and distresse
With the fire of gredynesse.
She fightith with hym ay, and stryveth,
That his herte asondre ryveth;
Such gredynesse hym assayllith,
That whanne he most hath, most he failith.
'Phiciciens and advocates
Gone right by the same yates.
They selle her science for wynnyng,
And haunte her crafte for gret getyng.
Her wynnyng is of such swetnesse,
That if a man falle in sikenesse,
They are fulle glad, for ther encrese;
For by her wille, withoute leese,
Everiche man shulde be seke,
And though they die, they sette not a leke.
After whanne they the gold have take,
Fulle litel care of hem they make.
They wolde that fourty were seke at onys,
Yhe, two hundred, in flesh and bonys,
And yit two thousand, as I gesse,
For to encresen her richesse.
They wole not worchen in no wise,
But for lucre and coveitise,

For physic gynneth first by fy,
The phicicien also sothely;
And sithen it goth fro fy to sy;[1]
To truste on hem is foly;
For they nyl in no maner gre,
Do right nought for charite.
'Eke in the same secte are sette
Alle tho that prechen for to gette
Worshipes, honour, and richesse.
Her hertis arn in grete distresse,
That folk lyve not holily.[2]
But aboven alle specialy,
Sich as prechen veyn glorie,
And toward God have no memorie,
But forth ypocrites trace,
And to her soules deth purchace,
And outward[3] shewing holynesse,
Though they be fulle of cursidnesse.
Not liche to the apostles twelve,
They deceyve other and hem selve;
Bigiled is the giler thanne.
For prechyng of a cursed man,
Though to other may profite,
Hymsilf it availeth not a myte;
For ofte goode predicacioun
Cometh of evel entencioun.
To hym not vailith his preching
Alle helpe he other with his teching;
For where they good ensaumple take,
There is he with veyne glorie shake.
'But late us leven these preachoures,
And speke of hem that in her toures
Hepe up her gold, and fast shette,
And sore theron her herte sette.

---

[1] Chaucer is accountable for this pun; it is not in the original.
[2] This sentence is ironical.
[3] *Outward* here means outwardly.

They neither love God, ne drede;
They kepe more than it is nede,
And in her bägges sore it bynde;
Out of the sonne, and of the wynde,
They putte up more than nede were,
Whanne they seen pore folk forfare,
For hunger die, and for cold quake;
God can wel vengeaunce therof take.[1]
Thre[2] gret myscheves hem assailith,
And thus in gadring ay travaylith;
With mych peyne they wynne richesse,
And drede hem holdith in distresse,
To kepe that they gadre faste;
With sorwe they leve it at the laste;[3]
With sorwe they bothe dye and lyve,
That unto richesse her hertis yive,
And in defaute of love it is,
As it shewith ful wel, iwys;
For if this gredy, the sothe to seyn,
Loveden, and were loved ageyn,
And good love regned over alle,
Such wikkidnesse ne shulde falle;
But he shulde yeve that most good hadde
To hem that weren in nede bistadde,
And lyve withoute false usure,
For charite, fulle clene and pure.
If they hem yeve to goodnesse,
Defendyng hem from ydelnesse,

---

[1] The poet contrasts the manner in which misers lay up their gold in places defended from the sun and wind, with their conduct in leaving their fellow-creatures to starve in the cold.

[2] The MS. reads *the;* but from the original it appears that *thre* is the true reading:—

'*Trois* grans mescheances aviennent
À ceus qui tiex vice maintiennent.'

[3] This appears to have been a kind of proverb. It is found in the following rhyming Latin lines:—

'Dives divitias non congregat absque labore
Non tenet absque metu, non desinit absque dolore.'

In alle this world thanne pore noon
We shulde fynde, I trowe not oon.
But chaunged is this world unstable,
For love is over alle vendable.
We se that no man loveth nowe
But for wynnyng and for prowe;
And love is thralled in servage
Whanne it is sold for avauntage;
Yit wommen wole her bodyes selle;
Suche soules goth to the devel of helle.'[1]

* * * * *

[1] With this line ends verse 5170 of the original. The next paragraph begins with verse 10,714. In the 5544 verses which Chaucer has not translated, Reason by various examples drawn from Scripture and the classics, shows the vanity of natural love and the caprice of Fortune, and exhorts l'Amant to fix his heart on charity, or the love of his neighbour. L'Amant, however, maintains his loyalty to the God of Love, and Reason leaves him to himself. He then consults l'Ami, who advises him to approach Bel-Accueil's prison by a road called Trop-Donner, constructed by Largesse. In the course of his instructions, l'Ami describes the Golden Age, when men enjoyed all things in common, and there were no such things as marriage and jealousy. This gives occasion to a very witty, but licentious, satire on women, from which Chaucer has taken some of the Wyf of Bathes Prologe. The Golden Age is dissolved in consequence of the absence of charity among men; and with hatred and covetousness arises the necessity for kings and magistrates. The origin of the regal office is thus described:—

'Un grant vilain entr'eus eslurent,
Le plus ossu de quanqu'il furent,
Le plus corase, le plus greignor,
Si le firent prince et seignor.'

Then follow examples of wicked kings and magistrates, and a complaint that one man should be permitted to amass as much wealth as would be sufficient for the subsistence of twenty. All this is conceived in that exaggerated spirit of socialism which produced the civil and religious commotions of this and the succeeding century. L'Ami then gives l'Amant directions as to how he is to conduct himself towards his mistress and his wife, in a discourse taken from Ovid's *Ars Amandi*, and leaves him to pursue his adventure. As l'Amant is about to approach the castle by the path of Trop-Donner, Richesse bars his entrance, and at length the God of Love comes to his assistance. The latter convokes his barons, Dame-Oyseuse, Noblesse-de-Cuer, Simplesse, Franchise, Pitée, Largesse, Hardiesse, Honneur, Courtoisie, Déduit, Jeunesse, Patience, Humilité, Bien-Celer, Contrainte-Abstinence, and Faulx-Semblant, to whom he declares that, having lost his most faithful

Whanne Love hadde told hem his entent,
The baronage[1] to councel went;
In many sentẽnces they fille,
And dyversely they seide hir wille:
But aftir discorde they accorded,
And her accord to Love recorded.[2]
'Sir,' seiden they, 'we ben at one,
Bi evene accorde of everichone,
Outake Richesse al oonly,
That sworne hath ful hauteynly,
That she the castelle nyl not assaile,
Ne smyte a stroke in this bataile,
With darte, ne mace, spere, ne knyf,
For man that spekith and berith the lyf,
And blameth youre emprise, iwys,
And from oure hoost departed is,
(Atte lest wey, as in this plyte,)[3]
So hath she this man in dispite;
For she seith he ne loved hir never,
And therfore she wole hate hym evere.
For he wole gadre no tresoure,
He hath hir wrath for evermore.

---

assistants, Ovid, Tibullus, Gallus, and William of Lorris, he has recourse to their [his barons'] assistance in besieging the castle in which Bel-Accueil is confined. Here Chaucer resumes.

[1] Baron was at this period a generic name given to all the noblesse, including dukes, marquises, &c., as in the expression the 'barons' wars.' The noblesse were divided into three orders, first the baron, holding a fief under the king, *in capite*, which entitled him to bear a banner, to lead his own vassals, and to have a peculiar war-cry, such as 'Montjoy,' or 'A Douglas,' or 'Cromaboo.' The second order was that of *bachelors*, or knights only, in Latin *milites secundi ordinis*, or *milites mediæ nobilitatis*. The third was that of esquire, or squire, appropriated originally to the sons of knights.—See vol. i. p. 79.

[2] This playing upon the words *discord*, *accord*, *record*, seems to be a sort of onomatopeia, representing the differences of opinion and final agreement of the barons.

[3] The meaning is, 'As far as this quarrel is concerned.' The feudal nobility could generally check the inordinate power of the crown, by refusing, under some pretext, to join the sovereign in the wars. There are numerous examples in the histories of England and Scotland of kings being thus left almost alone in the field.

He agylte hir never in other caas,
Lo, heere alle hoolly his trespas!
She seith wel, that this other day
He axide hir leve to gone the way
That is clepid To-moche-Yevyng,
And spak fulle faire in his praiyng;
But whanne he praiede hir, pore was he,
Therfore she warned hym the entre.
Ne yit is he not thryven so
That he hath geten a peny or two,
That quytely is his owne in holde.
Thus hath Richesse us alle tolde;
And whanne Richesse us this recorded,
Withouten hir we ben accorded.
And we fynde in oure accordaunce,
That False-Semblant and Abstinaunce,
With alle the folk of her bataille,
Shulle at the hyndre gate assayle,
That Wikkid-Tunge hath in kepyng,
With his Normans[1] fulle of janglyng.
And with hem Curtesie and Largesse,
That shulle shewe her hardynesse,
To the olde wyf that kepte so harde
Fair-Welcomyng[2] withynne her warde.
Thanne shal Delite and Wel-Heelynge[3]
Fonde Shame adowne to brynge,
With alle her oost erly and late;
They shulle assailen that ilke gate.
Agayns Drede shalle Hardynesse
Assayle, and also Sikernesse,
With alle the folk of her ledyng,
That never wist what wast fleyng.

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 144, note 2. To this M. Méon annexes a note, 'Dans quelques manuscripts on lit *Flamans*, dans d'autres *Picards*,' &c. These MSS. were probably written by Norman scriveners.

[2] *Bel-Accueil*, in the early part of the poem rendered *Bialacoil*, is here translated *Faire-Welcoming*.

[3] *Wel-Heelynge* is the translation of *Bien-Celer*, well-hiding, from *hille*, to hide.

Fraunchise shalle fight, and eke Pite,
With Daunger fulle of cruelte.
Thus is youre hoost ordeyned wele;
Doune shalle the castelle every dele,
If everiche do his entent,
So that Venus be present,
Your modir, fulle of vesselage,[1]
That can ynough of such usage;
Withouten hir may no wight spede
This werk, neithir for word ne deede.
Therfore is good ye for hir sende,
For thurgh hir may this werk amende.'

Amour. Lordynges, my modir, the goddesse,
That is my lady, and my maistresse,
Nis not alle at my willyng,
Ne doth not alle my desiryng.
Yit can she some tyme done labour,
Whanne that hir lust, in my socour,
As my nede is for to acheve,
But now I thenke hir not to greve.
My modir is she, and of childehede
I bothe worshipe hir, and eke drede;
For who that dredith sire ne dame,
Shal it abye in body or name.
And, natheles, yit kunne we
Sende aftir hir, if nede be,
And were she nygh, she comen wolde,
I trowe that no thyng myght hir holde.
My modir is of gret prowesse;
She hath tan many a fortresse,
That cost hath many a pounde er this,
There I nas not present, ywis;
And yit men seide it was my dede;
But I come never in that stede;
Ne me ne likith, so mote I the,
That such toures ben take withoute me.

[1] *Vesselage*, or vassalage, means worthiness, courage, that which becomes a good vassal. The original is, 'qui moult est sage.'

For why? Me thenkith that in no wise,
It may bene clepid but marchandise.
'Go bye a courser blak or white,
And pay therfor; than art thou quyte.
The marchaunt owith thee right nought,
Ne thou hym whanne thou it bought.
I wole not sèllyng clepe yevyng,
For sellyng axeth no guerdonyng;
Here lith no thank, ne no merite,
That oon goth from that other al quyte.
But this sellyng is not semblable;
For, whanne his hors is in the stable,
He may it selle ageyn, parde,
And wynnen on it, such happe may be;
Alle may the man not leese, iwys,
For at the leest the skynne is his.
Or ellis, if it so bitide
That he wole kepe his hors to ride,
Yit is he lord ay of his hors.
But thilk chaffare is wel wors,
There Venus entremetith nought;
For who so such chaffare hath bought,
He shall not worchen so wisely,
That he ne shal leese al outerly
Bothe his money and his chaffare;
But the seller of the ware,
The prys and profit have shalle.
Certeyne the bier shal leese alle,
For he ne can so dere it bye
To have lordship and fulle maistrie,
Ne have power to make lettyng,[1]
Neithir for yift ne for prechyng,

[1] To make lettynge means to let or hinder; as appears from the original:—

'Ne que jà puisse empéeschier,
Por donner ne por préeschier,
Uns estranges, s'il à venoit
Por donner tant, ou plus ou mains
Fust Brêton, Englois ou Romains.'

That of his chaffare maugre his,
Another shal have as moche iwis,
If he wole yeve as myche as he,
Of what contrey so that he be;
Or for right nought, so happe may,
If he can flater hir to hir pay.
Ben thanne siche marchauntz wise?
No, but fooles in every wise,
Whanne they bye sich thyng wilfully,
There as they lese her good folyly.
But natheles, this dar I say,
My modir is not wont to pay,
For she is neither so fool ne nyce,
To entremete hir of sich vice.[1]
But trust wel, he shal pay alle,
That repent of his bargeyn shalle,
Whanne Poverte putte[2] hem in distresse,
Alle were he scoler to Richesse;
That is for me in gret yernyng,
Whanne she assentith to my willyng.
'But, by my modir seint Venus,
And by hir fader Saturnus,
That hir engendride by his lyf,
But not upon his weddid wyf!
(Yit wole I more unto you swere,
To make this thyng the seurere)
Now by that feith, and that leaute
That I owe to alle my britheren fre,
Of which ther nys wight undir heven
That kan her fadris names neven,
So dyverse and so many ther be,
That with my modir have be prive!
Yit wolde I swere, for sikirnesse,
The pole[3] of helle to my witnesse,

---

[1] The MS. reads *wise*, a mere clerical error.
[2] The contracted form of *putteth*.
[3] *Pole* here means *pool*; the original is *palu*, which Méon interprets *marais*.

Now drynke I not this yeere clarre,[1]
If that I lye, or forsworne be!
(For of the goddes the usage is,
That who so hym forswereth amys,
Shal that yeer drynke no clarre.
Now have I sworne ynough, pardee;
If I forswere me thanne am I lorne,
But I wole never be forsworne)
Syth Richesse hath me failed heere,
She shal abye that trespas dere,
Atte leest wey, but I hir arme
With swerd, or sparth, or gysarme.
For certis sith she loveth not me,
Fro thilk tyme that she may se
The castelle and the tour to shake,
In sory tyme she shal awake.
If I may grepe a riche man
I shal so pulle hym,[2] if I can,
That he shal, in a fewe stoundes,
Lese alle his markis and his poundis.
I shal hym make his pens outslynge,
But they in his gerner sprynge;
Oure maydens shal eke pluk[3] hym so,
That hym shal neden fetheres mo,
And make hym selle his londe to spende,
But he the bet kunne hym defende.
'Pore men han maad her lord of me;
Although they not so myghty be,
That they may fede me in delite,
I wole not have hem in despite.
No good man hateth hem, as I gesse,
For chynche and feloun is Richesse,

---

[1] The original is *piment*, a drink compounded of wine and spices.

[2] Thus, in the General Prologe to *The Canterbury Tales*, it is said of the Sompnour, 'And prively a fynch eek cowde he pulle.'—See vol. i. p. 104. The original is:—

'Vous le me verres se tailler.'

[3] Si le plumeront nos pucelles.

That so can chase hem[1] and dispise,
And hem defoule in sondry wise.
They loven fülle bet, so God me spede,
Than doth the riche chynchy grede,
And ben in good feith, more stable
And trewer, and more serviable.
And therfore it suffisith me
Her good hert and her beaute.[2]
They han on me sette alle her thought,
And therfore I forgete hem nought.
I wole hem bringe in grete noblesse,
If that I were God of Richesse,
As I am God of Love sothely,
Sich routhe upon her pleynt have I.
Therfore I must his socour be,
That peyneth hym to serven me,
For if he deide for love of this,
Thanne semeth in me no love ther is.'
'Sir,' seide they, 'soth is every deel
That ye reherce, and we wote wel
Thilk oth to holde is resonable;
For it is good and covenable,
That ye on riche men han sworne.
For, sir, this wote we wel biforne;
If riche men done you homage,
That is as fooles done outrage;[3]
But ye shulle not forsworne be,
Ne lette therfore to drynke clarre,
Or pyment makid fresh and newe.
Ladies shulle hem such pepir brewe,[4]

[1] The MS. reads *hym*, but the context requires *hem*.
[2] *Beaute* was probably written by the scrivener by mistake for *bounte*. The original is:—
'Lor bon cuer et lor volonté.'
[3] This line appears to be corrupt. In the original it is:—
'Se riches homs vous font hommage
Il ne feront mie que sage.'
[4] The original is—
'Dames lor braceront tel poivre.'

If that they falle into her laas,
That they for woo mowe seyn 'Allas!'
Ladyes shullen evere so curteis be,
That they shal quyte youre oth alle free.
Ne sekith never othir vicaire,
For they shal speke with hem so faire
That ye shal holde you paied fulle wele.
Though ye you medle never a dele,
Late ladies worthe with her thynges,
They shal hem telle so fele tidynges,
And moeve hem eke so many requestis
Bi flateri, that not honest is,
And therto yeve hem such thankynges,
What with kissyng, and with talkynges,
That certis, if they trowed be,
Shal never leve hem londe ne fee
That it nyll as the moeble fare,
Of which they first delyverid are.
Now may ye telle us alle youre wille,
And we youre heestes shal fulfille.
'But Fals Semblant dar not, for drede
Of you, sir, medle hym of this dede,
For he seith that ye ben his foo;
He note, if ye wole worche hym woo.
Wherfore we pray you alle, beau sire,
That ye forgyve hym now your ire,
And that he may dwelle, as your man,
With Abstinence his dere lemman;
This oure accord and oure wille nowe.'
'Parfay,' seide Love, 'I graunte it yowe;
I wole wel holde hym for my man;
Now late hym come:' and he forth ran.
'Fals Semblant,' quod Love, 'in this wise
I take thee heere to my servise,
That thou oure freendis helpe alway,
And hyndreth hem neithir nyght ne day,
But do thy myght hem to releve,
And eke oure enemyes that thou greve.

Thyne be this myght, I graunte it thee,
My kyng of harlotes shalt thou be;[1]
We wole that thou have such honour.
Certeyne thou art a fals traitour,
And eke a theef; sith thou were borne,
A thousand tyme thou art forsworne.
But, netheles, in oure heryng,
To putte oure folk out of doutyng,
I bidde thee teche hem, wostowe howe?
By somme general signe nowe,
In what place thou shalt founden be,
If that men had myster[2] of thee,
And how men shal thee best espye,
For thee to knowe is gret maistrie;
Telle in what place is thyn hauntyng.'
F. Sem. 'Sir I have fele dyverse wonyng,
That I kepe not rehersed be,[3]
So that ye wolde respiten me.

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[1] *King of harlots* is a translation of Roy des Ribauds. M. Lantin de Dammercy quotes the *Philippide* of Guillaume le Brêton, and Froissart, to show that the word *ribauds* sometimes meant merely common soldiers, and that the chief of the body-guard of Philip Augustus was called *Le Roi des Ribauds*. He supposes that, because soldiers are usually persons of loose morals, the words *ribaud* and *ribaude* came to be applied to all debauched persons in general. Certain it is that they were early used in this sense. In 1446 a proclamation was made at Paris, that 'les ribaudes ne porteroient plus de saincture d'argent, ne de collets, ne de robbes a collets renversez, ne queuë de boutonnierre a leur chaperon, ne peaus de gris en leurs robbes, ne de menuvair; et qu'els allassent demourer ès bordeaux, ordonnez comme ils etoient au temps passé.'—*Journal de Paris sous les reynes de Charles VI. et VII.* Du Tillet says:—'Le grand prévôst de l'hôtel étoit nommé *Roy des Ribauds, et Prévôst des Ribauds:* sa juridiction s'etendoit sur les jeux de dez et de brelands, et sur les bordeaux qui étoient en l'ost du Roy.' The satire in this passage is lost, unless we understand that False-Semblant was made the provost-marshal, intrusted with the task of correcting the excesses of the dicers and debauchees who haunt the purlieus of courts. The latest notice of this curious subject is to be found in Mr. Wright's ed. of *Piers Ploughman*, Gloss. in voc.

[2] *Myster* means need. The original is—

'Se du trover mestier avoient.'

[3] That is, 'Which I do not wish to be divulged.'

For if that I telle you the sothe,
I may have harme and shame bothe.
If that my felowes wisten it,
My talis shulden me be quytt;
For certeyne they wolde hate me,
If ever I knewe[1] her cruelte;
For they wolde overalle holde hem stille
Of trouthe that is ageyne her wille;
Suche tales kepen they not here.[2]
I myght eftsoone bye it fulle deere,
If I seide of hem ony thing,
That ought displesith to her heryng.
For what word that hem prikke or biteth,
In that word noon of hem deliteth,
Al were it gospel the evangile,
That wolde reprove hem of her gile,
For they are cruel and hauteyne.
And this thyng wote I welle certeyne,
If I speke ought to peire her loos,
Your court shal not so welle be cloos,
That they ne shalle wite it atte last.
Of good men am I nought agast,
For they wole taken on hem no thyng,
Whanne that they knowe al my menyng;
But he that wole it on hym take,
He wole hymsilf suspecious make,
That he his lyf let[3] covertly,
In Gile and in Ipocrisie,
That me engendred and yaf fostryng.'
'They made a fulle good engendryng,'
Quod Love, 'for who so soothly telle,
They engendred the devel of helle.
But nedely, howsoevere it be,'
Quod Love, 'I wole and charge thee,

---

[1] *Knewe*, like *beknewe*, means here *disclosed*.
[2] That is, 'They do not care [kepen] to hear such tales.'
[3] *Let* is another form of *ledeth*.

To telle anoon thy wonyng places,
Heryng ech wight that in this place is;
And what lyf that thou lyvest also,
Hide it no lenger now; wherto?[1]
Thou most discovere alle thi wurchyng,
How thou servest, and of what thyng,
Though that thou shuldist for thi sothe-sawe
Ben al to-beten and to-drawe;
And yit art thou not wont, pardee.
But natheles, though thou beten be,
Thou shalt not be the first, that so
Hath for soth-sawe suffred woo.'

F. Sem. 'Sir, sith that it may liken you,
Though that I shulde be slayne right now,
I shall done youre comaundement,
For therto have I gret talent.'

Withouten wordis mo, right thanne,
Fals Semblant his sermon biganne,
And seide hem thus in audience:—
'Barouns, take heede of my sentence!
That wight that list to have knowing
Of Fals-Semblant fulle of flatering,
He must in worldly folk hym seke,
And, certes, in the cloistres eke;
I wone no where but in hem twey;[2]
But not lyk even, soth to sey;
Shortly, I wole herberwe me,
There I hope best to hulstred be;
And certeynly, sikerest hidyng,
Is undirnethe humblest clothing.

'Religiouse folk ben fulle covert;
Seculer folk ben more appert.
But natheles, I wole not blame
Religious folk, ne hem diffame,
In what habit that ever they go:
Religioun umble, and trewe also,

---

[1] 'What would be the use?'

[2] That is, 'Everywhere.'

Wole I not blame, ne despise,
But I nyl love it in no wise.
I mene of fals religious,
That stoute ben, and malicious;
That wolen in an abit goo,
And setten not her herte therto.
Religious folk ben al pitous;
Thou shalt not seen oon dispitous.
They loven no pride, ne no strif,
But humblely they wole lede her lyf,
With which folk wole I never be.[1]
And if I dwelle, I feyne me
I may wel in her abit go;
But me were lever my nekke atwo,
Than lette a purpose that I take,
What covenaunt that ever I make.
I dwelle with hem that proude be,
And fulle of wiles and subtilite;
That worship of this world coveiten,
And grete nede kunnen expleiten;
And gone and gadren gret pitaunces,
And purchace hem the acqueyntaunces
Of men that myghty lyf may leden;
And feyne hem pore, and hem silf feden
With gode morcels delicious,
And drinken good wyne precious,
And preche us povert and distresse,
And fisshen hem silf gret richesse,
With wily nettis that they cast:
It wole come foule at the last.
They ben fro clene religioun went;
They make the world an argument,[2]

[1] These are they who are really imbued with the spirit of their profession, and who not only wear the habit of religion, but also conform to its precepts: with these False-Semblant says he does not consort.

[2] That is, 'They try to convince the world by an argument which has a false conclusion:'—

'Il font ung argument au monde
Ou conclusion a honteuse.'

That hath a foule conclusioun.
'I have a robe of religioun,
Thanne am I alle religious:'
This argument is alle roignous;
It is not worth a croked brere;
Habite ne makith neithir monk ne frere,
But clene lyf and devocioun,
Makith gode men of religioun.
Nethelesse, ther kan noon answere,
How high that evere his heed he shere
With rasour[1] whetted never so kene,
That Gile in braunches kut thrittene,[2]
Ther can no wight distincte it so,
That he dare sey a word therto.
'But what herberwe that ever I take,
Or what semblant that evere I make,
I mene but gile, and folowe that;
For right no mo than Gibbe[3] our cat,
That awaiteth mice and rattes to killen,[4]
Me entende I but to bigilyng;
Ne no wight may, by my clothing,
Wite with what folk is my dwellyng;
Ne by my wordis yet, parde,
So softe and so plesaunt they be.

---

[1] Instead of rasour the MS. reads *resoun*, which is evidently a mere clerical error. The original is—

'Ne porquant mes n'i set repondre,
Tant face haute sa teste tondre,
Voire rere ou rasoer de lanches
Qui Barat trenche en treize tranches.'

[2] *Gile*, Guile, or *Barat*, cut into thirteen branches, may possibly be an allusion to the fact that thirteen friars made a covent, or convent.—See vol. ii. p. 122, note 4.

[3] This was the common name in England for a cat. Thus, in Skelton's *Death of Philip Sparrow*, we have, 'Whom Gib our cat hath slain;' and in Shakspeare, 'As melancholy as a gib-cat.' *Tibers* is the name in the original, as in the *Roman de Renart*.

[4] This line is omitted in the MS.

Biholde the dedis that I do;
But thou be blynde thou oughtest so;
For varie her wordis fro her deede,
They thenke on gile, without dreede,[1]
What maner clothing that they were,
Or what estate what evere they bere,
Lered or lewde, lord or lady,
Knyght, squier, burgeis, or bayly.'
Right thus while Fals Semblant sermoneth;
Eftsones Love hym aresoneth,
And brake his tale in the spekyng
As though he had hym tolde lesyng.
And seide: 'What devel is that I here?
What folk hast thou us nempned heere?
May men fynde religioun
In worldly habitacioun?'
F. Sem. 'Yhe, sir; it folowith not that they
Shulde lede a wikked lyf, parfey,
Ne not therfore her soules leese,
That hem to worldly clothes chese;
For, certis, it were gret pitee.
Men may in seculer clothes see,
Florishen hooly religioun.
Fulle many a seynt in feeld and toune,
With many a virgine glorious,
Devoute, and fulle religious,
Han deied, that comyn clothe ay beeren,
Yit seyntes neverethelesse they weren.
I cowde reken you many a ten;
Yhe, welnygh alle these hooly wymmen,
That men in chirchis herie and seke,
Bothe maydens, and these wyves eke,
That baren fulle many a faire child heere,
Wered alwey clothis seculere,
And in the same dieden they
That seyntes weren, and ben alwey.

[1] That is, 'For if men's words vary from their deeds, their intention is to deceive.'

The elevene thousand maydens deere,[1]
That beren in heven her ciergis clere,[2]
Of whiche men rede in chirche, and synge,
Were take in seculer clothing,
Whanne they resseyved martirdome,
And wonnen hevene unto her home.
Good hert makith the good thought;
The clothing yeveth ne reveth nought.
The good thought and the worching,
That makith the religioun flowryng;
Ther lyth the good religioun,
Aftir the right entencioun.
'Who so took a wethers skynne,
And wrapped a gredy wolf[3] therynne,
For he shulde go with lambis whyte,
Wenest thou not he wolde hem bite?
Yhis! neverthelasse, as he were woode,
He wolde hem wery, and drinke the bloode;
And wel the rather hem disceyve,
For sith they cowde not perceyve
His treget, and his cruelte,
They wolde hym folowe, al wolde he fle.
'If ther be wolves of sich hewe,
Amonges these apostlis newe,[4]
Thou, hooly chirche, thou maist be wailed!
Sith that thy citee is assayled
Thourgh knyghtis of thyn owne table,[5]
God wote thi lordship is doutable!

[1] The story of the eleven thousand virgins, said to have been martyred by the Huns at Cologne, in the year 352, is told in the *Legenda Aurea*. This marvellous number is supposed to be some mistake, arising from the ambiguity of the old Roman numerals.

[2] The *cierge*, or lighted candle, symbolizes faith.—Rev. ii. 5. Hence a lighted candle is placed in the hands of the expiring Catholic, to denote that he dies in the faith.

[3] In the original the wolf is called *Sire Ysangim*, as in the *Roman de Renart*.

[4] The friars are here called new apostles, because their chief mission was to supply the deficiencies of the secular priests and monks, by their learning and skill in preaching.

[5] Not only the knights of Arthur's Court, but all orders of knight-

If thei enforce it to wynne,
That shulde defende it fro withynne,
Who myght defense ayens hem make?
Without stroke it mote be take,
Of trepeget or mangonel;
Without displaiyng of pensel.
And if God nyl done it socour,
But lat renne in this colour,
Thou moost thyn heestis laten be.
Thanne is ther nought, but yelde thee,
Or yeve hem tribute, doutlees,
And holde it of hem to have pees:
But gretter harme bitide thee,
That they al maister of it be.
Wel konne they scorne thee withal;
By day stuffen they the walle,[1]
And al the nyght they mynen there.
Nay, thou planten most elles where
Thyn ympes, if thou wolt fruyt have.
Abide not there thi silf to save.
'But now pees! heere I turne ageyne;
I wole nomore of this thing seyne,
If I may passen me herby,
For I myght maken you wery.
But I wole heten you alway,
To helpe youre freendis what I may,
So they wollen my company;
For they be shent al outerly,
But if so falle, that I be
Ofte with hem, and they with me.
And eke my lemman[2] mote they serve,
Or they shulle not my love deserve.

---

hood were founded on the plan of a religious brotherhood, living in equality, and eating at a common table.

[1] The author insinuates that the friars, while they pretended to repair the breaches in the defences of the church, were really sapping them in secret.

[2] Scil., *Constrained-Abstinence.*

Forsothe I am a fals traitour;
God jugged me for a theef trichour;
Forsworne I am, but wel nygh none
Wote of my gile, til it be done.
'Thourgh me hath many oon deth resseyved,
That my treget nevere aperceyved;
And yit resseyveth, and shal resseyve,
That my falsnesse shal nevere aperceyve:
But who so doth, if he wise be,
Hym is right good be warre of me.
But so sligh is the aperceyvyng
That al to late cometh knowyng.[1]
For Protheus that cowde hym chaunge,
In every shap homely and straunge,
Cowde nevere sich gile ne tresoune
As I; for I come never in toune
There as I myght knowen be,
Though men me bothe myght here and see.
Fulle wel I can my clothis chaunge,
Take oon, and make another straunge.
Now am I knyght, now chasteleyne;
Now prelate, and now chapeleyne;
Now prest, now clerk, now forstere;
Now am I maister, now scolere;
Now monke, now chanoun, now baily;
What ever myster man am I.
Now am I prince, now am I page,
And kan by herte every langage.
Somme tyme am I hore and olde;
Now am I yonge, stoute, and bolde;
Now am I Robert, now Robyn;[2]
Now frere menor, now jacobyn;[3]

[1] This line is omitted in the MS. In the original it is:—
'Que trop est grief l'apercevance.'

[2] Robin the familiar name for Robert, is appropriated to persons of mean estate. Thus, in the story *Flores d'Ausi*, published by M. F. Michel in his *Théât. Franc. du Moyen Age*, the esquire is called *Robin*, but as soon as he is knighted he becomes *Mesire Robiers*.

[3] The friars *menor*, or minor, were Franciscans, the title minor, or

And with me folwith my loteby,
To done me solas and company,
That hight dame Abstinence, and reyned
In many a queynte array feyned.
Ryght as it cometh to hir lykyng,
I fulfille al hir desiryng.
Somtyme a wommans cloth take I;
Now am I mayde, now lady.
Somtyme I am religious;
Now lyk an anker[1] in an hous.
Somtyme am I prioresse,[2]
And now a nonne, and now abbesse;
And go thurgh alle regiouns,
Sekyng alle religiouns.[3]
But to what ordre that I am sworne,
I take the strawe and bete the corne;[4]
To joly folk I enhabite,
I axe nomore but her abite.[5]
What wole ye more? in every wise
Right as me lyst I me disgise.
Wel can I were me undir wede;
Unlyk is my word to my dede.
Thus make I into my trappis falle,[6]
Thurgh my pryveleges, alle

---

lesser, being adopted from humility. One of the 'reforms' of this order went further, and called themselves *minims*. The Jacobins were Dominicans, and were so called because their first house in France was in the *Rue St. Jacques* at Paris.

[1] Anker means an anchorite, or anachorite, one who retires (ἀναχωρέω) from the world into the desert.

[2] A prioresse was the principal of a female priory, that is, a religious house subject to an abbey, which directed its discipline, and appointed its officers.

[3] All the different religious orders.

[4] We ought to read:—'I lete the strawe and take the corne.'

[5] In the original:—

'Por gens aveugler i abit.'

Hence it would appear that *foly* is here a verb, meaning to blind, or make fools of.

[6] In the MS. *thus* is omitted; but being evidently necessary for the sense and metre, it is adopted from Speght.

That ben in Cristendome alyve.
I may assoile, and I may shryve,
That no prelat may lette me,[1]
Alle folk, where evere thei founde be:
I note no prelate may done so,
But it the pope be, and no mo,
That made thilk establisshing.
Now is not this a propre thing?
But, were my sleightis aperceyved,[2]

* * * *

As I was wont; and wostow whye?
For I dide hem a tregetrie;
But therof yeve I a lytel tale,
I have the silver and the male,
So have I prechid and eke shreven,
So have I take, so have I yeven,
Thurgh her foly, husbonde and wyf,
That I lede right a joly lyf,
Thurgh symplesse of the prelacye;
They knowe not al my tregettrie.
'But for as moche as man and wyf
Shulde shewe her paroche prest her lyf
Onys a yeer, as seith the book,
Er ony wight his housel took,[3]

[1] The friars were independent of the Ordinary, being under the jurisdiction of their general alone, hence the bitter jealousy with which they were regarded by the secular clergy. Thus in *Jacke Uplande*:— 'And alle men knowne wele that they [the friars] bee not obedient to Bishops ne liegemen to Kynges; neither they tillen ne sowen, weeden ne repen woode, corne ne grasse, neither nothing that man shulde helpe, but onely hemselves her lyves to susteyne.'

[2] A line is here wanting in the MS., and in *Speght*. *The original* enables us to supply the sense:—

'Més mes traits ont aperceus,
Si n'en sui mes si receus
Envers eus si cum ge soloie,
Por ce que trop fort les boloie.'

The missing line was, probably:—

'I shulde no lenger ben received.

[3] The book here means the Bible. The allusion is probably to Matt. xviii. 16, and John xx. 23. The practice of confession to a

Thanne have I pryvylegis large,
That may of mych thing discharge,
For he may seie right thus parde:
'Sir Preest, in shrift I telle it thee,
That he to whom that I am shryven,
Hath me assoiled, and me yeven
For penaunce sothly for my synne,
Which that I fonde me gilty ynne;
Ne I ne have nevere entencioun
To make double confessioun,
Ne reherce efte my shrift to thee;
O shrift is right ynough to me.[1]
This ought thee suffice wele,
Ne be not rebel never adele;
For certis, though thou haddist it sworne,
I wote no prest ne prelat borne
That may to shrift efte me constreyne.[2]
And if they done I wole me pleyne;
For I wote where to pleyne wele.
Thou shalt not streyne me a dele,
Ne enforce me, ne not me trouble,
To make my confessioun double.
Ne I have none affecsioun
To have double absolucioun.
The firste is right ynough to me;
This latter assoilyng quyte I thee.

---

priest may be traced to the first three centuries.—See Bingham, *Eccles. Antiq.* xviii. c. 3, s. 5; but the Council of Lateran first decreed that all the faithful should confess to their parish priest once a year at least, before their Easter communion.—See *Conc. Trid.* Sessio xiv. c. v. *De Confessione.* The licences granted by the Pope to the Mendicant Orders, to administer the sacrament of Penance within the jurisdiction of the secular clergy, gave rise to frequent disputes, which arrived at such a height in the 13th century, that Martin IV. and Boniface VIII. were obliged to modify them.

[1] This is Thomases argument in *The Sompnoures Tale.*—See vol. ii. p. 117.

[2] Those who did not communicate at Easter, were liable, both before and after the Reformation, to be presented to the Ordinary, and incurred the penalty of the lesser excommunication, which subjected them to civil penalties at common law.

I am unbounde; what maist thou fynde
More of my synnes me to unbynde?
For he that myght hath in his honde,
Of alle my synnes me unbonde.[1]
And if thou wolt me thus constreyne,
That me mote nedis on thee pleyne,
There shalle no jugge imperial,
Ne bisshop, ne official,
Done jugement on me; for I
Shal gone and pleyne me openly
Unto my shrift-fadir newe,
That hight Frere Wolf[2] untrewe,
And he shal cheveys hym for me,[3]
For I trowe he can hampre thee.
But, lord! he wolde be wrooth withalle,
If men hym wolde Frere Wolf calle!
For he wolde have no pacience,
But done al cruel vengeaunce!
He wolde his myght done at the leest,
No thing spare for Goddis heest.
And, God so wys be my socour,
But thou yeve me my savyour[4]
At Ester, whanne it likith me,
Withoute presyng more on thee,
I wole forth, and to hym gone,
And he shal housel me anoon,
For I am out of thi grucching;
I kepe not dele with thee no thing.'
Thus may he shryve hym, that forsaketh
His paroche prest, and to me takith.
And if the prest wole hym refuse,
I am fulle redy hym to accuse,

---

[1] To unbind means to absolve from ecclesiastical censures, in allusion to our Lord's commission to the Apostles.—John xx. 23.

[2] The allusion is apparently to John x. 12.

[3] That is, 'He will help me against you;' in the original:—
'Me saura bien vous chevir.'

[4] That is, 'Admit me to communion.'

And hym punysshe and hampre so,
That he his chirche shal forgo.
'But who so hath in his felyng
The consequence of such shryvyng,
Shal sene that prest may never have myght
To knowe the conscience aright
Of hym that is undir his cure.
And this is ageyns holy scripture,
That biddith every heerde honeste
Have verry knowing of his beeste.[1]
But pore folk that gone by strete,
That have no gold, ne sommes grete,
Hem wolde I lete to her prelates,
Or lete her prestis knowe her states,
For to me right nought yeve they;
Amour. 'And why it is?'
F. Sem. 'For they ne may.
They ben so bare, I take no kepe;
But I wole have the fat sheepe;
Lat parish prestis have the lene,
I yeve not of her harme a bene![2]
And if that prelates grucche it,
That oughten wroth be in her witt,
To leese her fat beestes so,
I shal yeve hem a stroke or two,
That they shal leesen with force,
Yhe, bothe her mytre and her croce.
Thus jape I hem, and have do longe,
My pryveleges[3] ben so stronge.'
Fal-sSemblant wolde have stynted heere,
But Love ne made hym no such cheere,
That he was wery of his sawe;
But for to make hym glad and fawe,

---

[1] Prov. xxvii. 23.

[2] That is, 'I care not a bean for all the harm they can do me.'

[3] By privileges is meant the extraordinary jurisdiction granted to the Mendicants by various Bulls.

He seide:—'Telle on more specialy,
Hou that thou servest untrewly.
Telle forth, and shame thee never a dele,
For, as thyn abit shewith wele,
Thou servest an hooly heremyte.'
F. Sem. 'Sothe is; but I am but an ypocrite.'
Amour. 'Thou goste and prechest poverte?
F. Sem. 'Yhe, sir; but Richesse hath pouste.'
Amour. 'Thou prechest abstinence also?'
F. Sem. 'Sir, I wole fillen, so mote I go,
My paunche of good mete and wyne,
As shulde a maister of dyvyne;
For how that I me pover feyne,
Yit alle pore folk I disdeyne.[1]
I love bettir the queyntaunce,
Ten tyme, of the kyng of Fraunce,
Than of a pore man of mylde mode,
Though that his soule be al so gode.
For whanne I see beggers quakyng,
Naked on myxnes al stynkyng,
For hungre crie, and eke for care,
I entremete not of her fare.
They ben so pore, and ful of pyne,
They myght not oonys yeve me a dyne,
For they have no thing but her lyf;
What shulde he yeve that likketh his knyf?
It is but foly to entremete,
To seke in houndes nest fat-mete.[2]
Lete bere hem to the spitel anoon,
But, for me,[3] comfort gete they noon.
But a rich sike usurere
Wolde I visite and drawe nere.

---

[1] This was a favourite topic of censure on the Mendicants. It is used in the General Prologe to *The Canterbury Tales*.—See vol. i. p. 88.

[2] Fat-mete appears to mean *par excellence*, black pudding: the original is *saing*, blood.

[3] For me, as far as I am concerned.

Hym wolde I comforte and rehete,
For I hope of his gold to gete.
And if that wikkid Deth hym have,
I wole go with hym in his grave.
And if ther ony reprove me,
Why that I lete the pore be,
Wostow how I not ascape?
I sey and swere hym ful rape,
That riche men han more tecches
Of synne, than han pore wrecches,
And han of counseile more mister;
And therfore I wole drawe hem ner.
But as grete hurt, it may so be,
Hath a soule in right grete poverte,
As soul is grete richesse, forsothe,
Albeit that they hurten bothe.
For richesse and mendicitees
Ben clepid two extremytees;
The mene is cleped suffisaunce,
Ther lyth of vertu the aboundaunce.
For Salamon fulle wel I wote,
In his parables us wrote,
As it is knowe of many a wight,
In his thrittene chapitre right;—
God thou me kepe, for thi pouste,
Fro richesse and mendicite;[1]
For if a riche man hym dresse,
To thenke to mych on richesse,
His herte on that so fer is sett,
That he his creatour foryett;
And he that beggith, wole ay greve.
How shulde I bi his word hym leve?
Unnethe that he nys a mycher,
Forsworne, or ellis Goddis lyer.[2]

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[1] For *thrittene* we ought to read *thritteth*, or thirtieth, for the allusion is to Prov. xxx. 8.

[2] False-Semblant says that the poor man has as many temptations to envy and fraud, as the rich has to forgetfulness of God.

...

Thus seith Salamon sawes.
Ne we fynde writen in no lawis,
And namely in oure Cristen lay,
(Who seith, 'yhe,' I dar sey, 'nay')
That Crist, ne his apostlis dere,
While that they walkide in erthe heere,
Were never seen hir bred beggyng,
For they nolden beggen for no thing.
And right thus were men wont to teche;
And in this wise wolde it preche,
The maistres of divinite
Somtyme in Parys the citee.[1]
'And if men wolde ther geyn appose
The nakid text, and lete the glose,
It myght soone assoiled be;[2]
For men may wel the sothe see,
Thát, parde, they myght axe a thing
Pleynly forth without begging.
For they weren Goddis herdis deere,
And cure of soules hadden heere,
They nolde no thing begge her fode;
For aftir Crist was done on rode,
With ther propre hondis they wrought,
And with travel, and ellis nought,
They wonnen alle her sustenaunce,
And lyveden forth in her penaunce,
And the remenaunt yaf awey
To other pore folkis alwey.[3]
They neither bilden tour ne halle,[4]
But they in houses smale with alle.

[1] The University of Paris was always hostile to the Mendicants.

[2] That is, 'If men would oppose the text of Scripture against these propositions, and leave the gloss, or comment, the question might soon be settled.'

[3] Ephes. iv. 28. Here St. Paul is not speaking of clergymen, but of laymen, who, before their conversion, had been thieves. And though he himself, in order to remove all appearance of interested motives, worked at a trade, yet he asserts in the strongest language his right, and that of all ministers of Christ, to maintenance from the alms of the faithful.—2 Cor. xi. 7, *et seq.*

[4] Alluding to the beautiful abbeys built by the friars. But though

A myghty man that can and may,
Shulde with his honde and body alway,
Wynne hym his fode in laboring,
If he ne have rent or sich a thing,
Although he be religious,
And God to serven curious.
Thus mote he done, or do trespas,
But if it be in certeyn cas,
That I can reherce, if myster be,
Right wel, whanne the tyme I se.
'Seke the book of Seynt Austyne,[1]
Be it in papir or perchemyne,
There as he writte of these worchynges,
Thou shalt seen that noon excusynges
A parfit man ne shulde seke
By wordis, ne bi dedis eke,
Although he be religious,
And God to serven curious,
That he ne shal, so mote I go,
With propre hondis and body also,
Gete his fode in laboryng,
If he ne have proprete of thing.
Yit shulde he selle alle his substaunce,
And with his swynk have sustenaunce,
If he be parfit in bounte.[2]
Thus han tho bookes tolde me:

---

there is exquisite taste displayed in these structures, it may be questioned whether they were as conducive to personal self-indulgence as the ugly, but snug, parsonage-houses of the modern clergy.

[1] The whole of this dissertation on Mendicancy is borrowed from St. Augustin's book, *De Opere Monachorum, ad Aur. Episc. Carthag.*, in which he shows that *monks*, who in his time were seldom in holy orders, are bound to earn their bread by manual labour. This is in accordance with the rule of St. Benet.—See vol. i. p. 85, note 4. But St. Augustin's arguments do not apply to friars, who were priests actually employed in the duties of the ministry, and therefore entitled to maintenance according to St. Paul, 1 Cor. ix.

[2] That is, 'Even though he have property, yet if he wishes to follow the counsels of perfection, he ought to sell it, and labour for his maintenance.'—Matt. xix. 21.

For he that wole gone ydilly,
And usith it ay besily
To haunten other mennes table,
He is a trechour ful of fable,[1]
Ne he ne may, by gode resoun,
Excuse hym by his orisoun.
For men bihoveth, in somme gise,
Ben[2] somtyme in Goddis servise,
To gone and purchasen her nede.
Men mote eten, that is no drede,
And slepe, and eke do other thing,
So longe may they leve praiyng.
So may they eke her prair blynne,
While that they werke her mete to wynne.
Seynt Austyn wole therto accorde,
In thilke book that I recorde.[3]
Justinian[4] eke, that made lawes,
Hath thus forboden by olde dawes:
'No man, up peyne to be dede,
Mighty of body, to begge his brede,
If he may swynke it for to gete;
Men shulde hym rather mayme or bete,
Or done of hym aperte justice,
Than suffren hym in such malice.'
'They done not wel, so mote I go,
That taken such almesse so,
But if they have somme pryvelege,
That of the peyne hem wole allege.

---

[1] The original:—

'Lobierres est, et sert de fable.'

He is a deceiver, and serves as a laughing stock.

[2] In order to make sense of the passage we ought to read, 'That ben sometyme,' &c. The meaning is:—'It behoves men who are engaged in God's service, nevertheless, sometimes to go and obtain the necessaries of life.'

[3] See *ante*, p. 222, note 1.

[4] De mendicantibus validis.—*Codex Justin.* xi. 25. Justinian, whose celebrated code called the Pandects, forms the basis of the Civil and Canon Law, was Emperor of the Eastern Empire in 527.

But how that is, can I not see,
But if the prince disseyved be;
Ne I ne wene not sikerly,
That they may have it rightfully.
But I wole not determine
Of prynces power, ne defyne,
Ne by my word comprende, iwys,
If it so ferre may strecche in this.
I wole not entremete a dele;
But I trowe that the book[1] seith wele,
Who that takith almessis, that be
Dewe to folk that men may se
Lame, feble, wery, and bare,
Pore, or in such maner care,
That konne wynne hem nevermo,
For they have no power therto,
He etith his owne dampnyng,
But if He lye that made al thing.
And if such a truaunt fynde,
Chastise hym wel, if ye be kynde.
But they wolde hate you, percas,
And if ye fillen in her laas.
They wolde eftsoonys do you scathe,
If that they myght, late or rathe;
For they be not fulle pacient,
That han the world thus foule blent.
And witeth wel, that God bad
The good man selle al that he had,
And folowe hym, and to pore it yeve;[2]
He wolde not therfore that he lyve,
To serven hym in mendience,
For it was nevere his sentence;
But he bad wirken whanne that neede is,
And folwe hym in goode dedis.
Seynt Poule that loved al hooly chirche,
He bade thappostles for to wirche,

[1] The allusion appears to be to Matt. xxiii. 14.
[2] Matt. xix. 21.

And wynnen her lyflode in that wise,
And hem defended truaundise,
And seide, 'Wirketh with youre honden;'[1]
Thus shulde the thing be undirstonden.
He nolde, iwys, have bidde hem begging,
Ne sellen gospel, ne prechyng,[2]
Lest they berafte, with her askyng,
Folk of her catel or of her thing.
For in this world is many a man
That yeveth his good, for he ne can
Werne it for shame, or ellis he
Wolde of the asker delyvered be;
And for he hym encombrith so,
He yeveth hym good to late hym go:
But it can hym no thyng profit,
They lese the yift and the meryt.
The good folk that Poule to preched,
Profred hym ofte, whan he hem teched,
Somme of her good in charite;
But therof right no thing toke he;
But of his hondwerk wolde he gete
Clothes to wryne hym, and his mete.[3]
Amour. 'Telle me thanne how a man may
That al his good to pore hath yiven, [lyven,
And wole but oonly bidde his bedis,
And never with hondis laboure his nedes.
May he do so?
F. Sem. Yhe, sir.
Amour. And how?
F. Sem. 'Sir, I wole gladly telle yow:—
Seynt Austyn seith, a man may be
In houses that han proprete,

---

[1] It would not be easy to find any passage in which St. Paul commands the Apostles to work with their hands.

[2] 'Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.'—1 Cor. ix. 14.

[3] In some instances St. Paul refused alms, but in others he asks his converts for contributions towards his necessities.—2 Cor. xi.

As templers[1] and hospitelers,[2]
And as these chanouns regulers,[3]

[1] The Knights-Templars were founded in 1119 by Hugh de Paganis. Their habit was a white garment with a red cross on the breast. 'It is falsely fathered on St. Bernard,' says Fuller, 'that he appointed them their rule, who prescribeth not what they should do, but onely describeth what they did, namely, How they were never idle, mending their old clothes when wanting other employment; never played at chesse or dice, never hawked nor hunted; beheld no stage-playes, arming themselves with faith within, with steel without; aiming more at strength than state; to be feared, not admired; to strike terror with their valour, not to stirre covetousnese with their wealth in the heart of their enemies. . . . . Indeed, at first they were very poor, in token whereof they gave for their seal two men riding on one horse, and hence it was that if the Turks took any of them prisoners, their constant ransome was a sword and a belt.'—*Holy Warre*, ii. 16. The Templars afterwards degenerated from their pristine poverty and virtue, and were dissolved by Pope Clement V., in 1310, and many of the knights were burned by order of Philippe le Bel. Fuller relates that one of these knights at the stake cited the Pope and the King to appear at the judgment-seat of Christ within a year and a day, before the expiration of which time they both died. 'Besides,' adds Fuller, 'King Philip missed of his expectation, and the morsel [the lands of the Templars] fell besides his mouth; for the lands of the Templars, which were first granted to him as a portion for his youngest sonne, were afterwards, by the Councel of Vienne, bestowed on the Knights Hospitallers.'—*Ibid.*, v. 2.

[2] The same witty writer gives the following account of the Hospitallers. 'About this time (anno 1099) under Gerard, their first Grand Master, began the Order of Knights-Hospitallers. Indeed, more anciently there were Hospitallers in Jerusalem, but there were no knights; they had a kind of Order, but no honour annexed to it, but were pure alms-men, whose house was founded, and they maintained by the charity of the merchants of Amalphia, a citie in Italy. . . They wore a red belt with a white crosse, and, on a black cloke, the white crosse of Jerusalem, which *is* a cross crossed, or five crosses together, in memorie of our Saviour's five wounds. . . Their profession was to fight against infidels, and to secure pilgrims coming to the Sepulchre, and they vowed poverty, chastity, and obedience. Reimundus de Podio, their second Master, made some additionalls to their profession, as, they must receive the sacrament thrice a year, heare mass once a day, if possible; they were to be no merchants, no usurers, to fight no private duells; to stand neuters, and to take no side if the Princes of Christendome should fall out. But,' adds Fuller, 'it is given to most religious orders to be clear in the spring, and mirie in the streame. These Hospitallers afterwards getting wealth, unlaced themselves from the strictnesse of their first institution, and grew loose into all licentiousnesse.'—*Holy Warre*, ii. 4. This order lasted till our own days, being removed from Jerusalem to Rhodes, and thence to Malta.

[3] The Chanons, or Canons regular, were a quasi-religious order

Or white monkes, or these blake,[1]
(I wole no mo ensamplis make)
And take therof his sustenyng,
For therynne lyth no begging,
But other weys not, ywys;
Yit Austyn gabbith not of this.
And yit fulle many a monke laboreth,
That God in hooly chirche honoureth;
For whanne her swynkyng is agone,
They rede and synge in chirche anone.
'And for ther hath ben gret discorde,
As many a wight may bere recorde,
Upon the estate of mendiciens,
I wole shortly, in youre presence,
Telle how a man may begge at nede,
That hath not wherwith hym to fede,
Maugre his feloues jangelynges,
For sothfastnesse wole none hidyngis;
And yit percas I may abey,
That I to yow sothly thus sey.
Lo heere the caas especial:—
If a man be so bestial,
That he of no craft hath science,
And nought desireth ignorence,
Thanne may he go a begging yerne,
Til he somme maner crafte kan lerne,
Thurgh which, without truaundyng,
He may in trouthe have his lyvyng.
Or if he may done no labour,
For elde, or sykenesse, or langour,
Or for his tendre age also,
Thanne may he yit a begging go.
Or if he have peraventure,
Thurgh usage of his norture,

living under a certain rule, but much less strict than that of the monks or friars.—See vol. iii. p. 24, note 2.

[1] The white monks were Cistercians, a reformed order of Benedictine; the black, the unreformed.

Lyved over deliciously,
Thanne oughten good folk comunly
Han of his myscheef somme pitee,
And suffren hym also, that he
May gone aboute and begge his breed,
That he be not for hungur deed.
Or if he have of craft kunnyng,
And strengthe also, and desiryng
To wirken, as he had what,
But he fynde neithir this ne that,
Thanne may he begge til that he
Have geten his necessite.
Or if his wynnyng be so lite,
That his labour wole not acquyte
Sufficiantly al his lyvyng,
Yit may he go his breed begging;
Fro dore to dore, he may go trace,
Til he the remenaunt may purchace.
Or if a man wolde undirtake
Ony emprise for to make,
In the rescous of oure lay,[1]
And it defenden as he may,
Be it with armes or lettrure,
Or other covenable cure,
If it be so he pore be,
Thanne may hé begge, til that he
May fynde in trouthe for to swynke
And gete hym clothe, mete, and drynke.
Swynke he with his hondis corporelle,
And not with his hondis espirituelle.
'In al this caas, and in semblables,
If that ther ben mo resonables,
He may begge, as I telle you heere,
And ellis nought in no manere,
As William Seynt Amour[2] wolde preche,
And ofte wolde dispute and teche

[1] Our law, *i. e.*, Christianity.
[2] William of St. Amour was a Doctor of the Sorbonne, and flourished

Of this mater alle opënly
At Parys fulle solempnely.
And al so God my soule blesse
As he had in this stedfastnesse
The accorde of the universite,
And of the puple, as semeth me.
'No good man oughte it to refuse,
Ne ought hym therof to excuse,
Be wrothe or blithe, who so be;
For I wole speke, and telle it thee,
Al shulde I dye, and be putt doun,
As was seynt Poule, in derke prisoun;
Or be exiled in this caas
With wrong, as maister William was,
That my moder Ypocrysie
Banysshed for hir gret envye.
'My moder flemed hym, Seynt Amour:
The noble dide such labour
To susteyne evere the loyalte,
That he to moche agilt me.
He made a book, and lete it write,
Wherin his lyf he dide al write,[1]
And wolde ich reneyed begging,
And lyved by my traveylyng,
If I ne had rent ne other goode.
What? wened he that I were woode?
For labour myght me never plese,
I have more wille to bene at ese;
And have wel lever, soth to sey,
Bifore the puple patre and prey,

about the year 1260. He wrote a book against the Mendicant Orders, entitled, *De Periculis Novissimorum Temporum*, which was answered by St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure, and condemned by Alexander IV. William de St. Amour was banished France.

[1] In the MS. this line is erased, and written over it is:—

'Of thynges that he best myght.'

Speght's reading agrees with the original:—

'Où sa vie toute escrivre.'

And wrie me in my foxerie
Under a cope of papelardie.'[1]
Quod Love, 'What devel is this that I heere?
What wordis tellest thou me heere?'
F. Sem. 'What, sir? Falsnesse, that apert is.
Amour. 'Thanne dredist thou not God?'
F. Sem. 'No, certis:
For selde in grete thing shal he spede
In this world, that God wole drede;
For folk that hem to vertu yeven,
And truly on her owne lyven,
And hem in goodnesse ay contene,
On hem is lytel thrift sene;
Such folk drinken gret misese;
That lyf may me never plese.
But se what gold han usurers,
And silver eke in garners,
Taylagiers, and these monyours,
Bailifs, bedels, provost, countours;
These lyven wel nygh by rávyne,
The smale puple hem mote enclyne,
And they as wolves wole hem eten.
Upon the pore folk they geten
Fulle moche of that they spende or kepe;
Nis none of hem that he nyl strepe,
And wrine hem silf wel at fulle;
Without scaldyng they hem pulle.[2]
The stronge the feble overgoth;
But I, that were my symple cloth,
Robbe bothe robbed and robbours,
And gile giled, and gilours.
By my treget, I gadre and threste
The gret tresour into my cheste,

[1] This resembles the account given of himself by the Pardonere — See vol. iii. p. 72.

[2] This seems to be an allusion to the common practice of scalding a hog to make the hair come off easily. False-Semblant says that these usurers, tax-gatherers, and the rest, fleece the people no less effectually than if they scalded them as a butcher does a hog.

That lyth with me sō fast bounde.
Myn high paleys do I founde,
And my delites I fulfille,
With wyne at feestes at my wille,
And tables fulle of entremees;
I wole no lyf, but ese and pees,
And wynne gold to spende also.
For whanne the gret bagge is go,
It cometh right with my japes.[1]
Make I not wel tumble myn apes?
To wynnen is alwey myn entent;
My purchase is bettir than my rent;
For though I shulde beten be,
Over al I entremete me;
Without me may no wight dure.
I walke soules for to cure;
Of al the world cure have I
In brede and lengthe; boldly
I wole bothe preche and eke counceilen;
With hondis wille I not traveilen,
For of the pope I have the bulle.[3]
I ne holde not my wittes dulle;
I wole not stynten, in my lyve,[4]
These emperours for to shryve,
Or kyngis, dukis, and lordis grete;
But pore folk al quyte I lete.
I love no such shryvyng, parde,
But it for other cause be.
I rekke not of pore men,
Her astate is not worth an hen.

---

[1] That is, 'When my purse is empty I fill it by means of my tricks.'

[2] In the original:—

'Mieux vaut mes porchas que ma rente.'

This expression occurs in *The Freres Tale*, vol. ii. p. 95.

[3] The bull by which the Pope granted extraordinary jurisdiction to the friars, or mendicants, who thus became a sort of home-missionaries, independent of the bishops and parish-priests.

[4] That is, 'As long as I live.'

Where fyndest thou a swynker of labour
Have me unto his confessour?
But emperesses, and duchesses,
Thise queenes, and eke countesses,
Thise abbessis, and eke bygyns,[1]
These gret ladyes palasyns,
These joly knyghtis, and baillyves,
Thise nonnes, and thise burgeis wyves,
That riche ben, and eke plesyng,
And thise maidens welfaryng,
Wherso they clad or naked be,
Uncounceiled goth ther noon fro me.[2]
And, for her soules savete,
At lord and lady, and her meyne,
I axe, whanne thei hem to me shryve,
The proprete of al her lyve,
And make hem trowe, bothe meest and leest,
Hir paroch prest nys but a beest
Ayens[3] me and my companye,
That shrewis ben as gret as I;
For whiche I wole not hide in holde,
No pryvete that me is tolde,

[1] The *Beguines* are a community of women, living under a certain rule, but capable of possessing private property, and not bound by religious vows. Thomassin considers them as a kind of Chanoinesses. Their name is derived, according to Du Cange, from their founder, St. Begga, or Begghe, Duchess of Brabant, daughter of Pepin of Landau, and sister of St. Gertrude. She married Anchises, son of Arnould, Bishop of Metz, and after her husband's death retired to the Monastery of Andenne, where she died in 692 or 698. There were several of these communities in Flanders, Picardy, and Lorraine; and the *Béguinage*, or quarter which they inhabit, is still one of the most interesting features of the city of Ghent.

[2] Thus, in *The Testament of Love*, Chaucer, describing the luxurious clergy, says ironically:—'Of poore men have they gret care! For [because] they ever crave and nothing offren, they wolden have them dolven.' And again, in *Jacke Uplande*, the same interested line of conduct is ascribed to the friars:—'Why busy ye not to here the shrift of pore folke, as well as of riche lordes and ladies, sith they mowe have more plente of shrift-faderes than pore folke mowe.'

[3] That is, 'In comparison with me and my companions.' This is exactly the line which the friar takes in *The Sompnour's Tale*.—See vol. ii. p. 112.

That I by word or sïgne, ywis,
Wole make hem knowe what it is,
And they wolen also tellen me;
They hele fro me no pryvyte.[1]
And for to make yow hem perceyven,
That usen folk thus to disceyven,
I wole you seyn, withouten drede,
What men may in the Gospel rede,
Of Seynt Mathew,[2] the gospelere,
That seith, as I shal you sey heere.
'Uppon the chaire of Moyses'
(Thus is it glosed doutles:—
That is the olde testament,
For therby is the chaire ment)
'Sitte scribes and pharisen;'
(That is to seyn, the cursid men,
Whiche that we ypocritis calle)
'Doth that they preche, I rede you alle,
But doth not as they don a dele,
That ben not wery to seye wele,
But to do wel, no wille have they;
And they wolde bynde on folk alwey,
That ben to be giled able,
Burdons that ben importable;
On folkes shuldris thinges they couchen,
That they nyl with her fyngris touchen.'
Amour. 'And why wole they not touche it?'
F. Sem. 'Why?'
For hem ne lyst not, sikirly;

[1] In accusing the friars of disclosing secrets communicated to them under the seal of confession, John of Meun lays to their charge one of the most heinous offences against the law of the Church of which they could be guilty, and which, if believed, would most effectually destroy their influence. The obligation to secrecy in this case appears to be recognised by the law of England; for on the trial of Garnet, as an accessary before the fact in the Gunpowder Plot, the question of his innocence or guilt turns upon the evidence as to whether the intended assassination were revealed to him in confession or not.

[2] Matt. xxiii. 1, *et seq.*

For sadde burdons that men taken,
Make folkes shuldris aken.
And if they do ought that good bee,
That is for folk it shulde se:
Her burdons larger maken they,
And make her hemmes[1] wide alwey,
And loven setes at the table
The firste and most honourable;
And for to han the first chaieris
In synagogis, to hem fulle deere is;
And willen that folk hem loute and grete,
Whanne that they passen thurgh the strete,
And wolen be cleped 'Maister' also.'[2]
But they ne shulde not willen so;
The gospel is ther ageyns I gesse:
That shewith wel her wikkidnesse.
'Another custome use we:—
Of hem that wole ayens us be,
We hate hym deedly everichone,
And we wole werrey hym, as oon.
Hym that oon hatith, hate we alle,
And conjecte how to done hym falle.
And if we seen hym wynne honour.
Richesse or preis, thurgh his valour,
Provende, rent, or dignyte,
Fulle fast, iwys, compassen we
By what ladder he is clomben so;
And for to maken hym doun to go,
With traisoun we wole hym defame,
And done hym leese his good name.
Thus from his ladder we hym take,
And thus his freendis foes we make;
But word ne wite shal he noon,
Tille alle hise freendis ben his foon.

---

[1] That is, the hems of their garments, or phylacteries, upon which, in accordance with the law of Moses (Num. xv. 38) were written texts from the Old Testament.—See Matt. xxiii. 6. They were also called *Tephilli*.

[2] See *Sompnour's Tale*.—Vol. ii. p. 120.

For if we dide it openly,
We myght have blame redily;
For hadde he wist of oure malice,
He hadde hym kept but he were nyce.
'Another is this, that if so falle,
That ther be oon amonge us alle
That doth a good turne, out of drede,
We seyn it is oure alder deede.
Yhe, sikerly, though he it feyned,
Or that hym list, or that hym deyned
A man thurgh hym avaunced be,
Therof alle perseners,[1] be we,
And tellen folk where so we go,
That man thurgh us is sprongen so.
And for to have of men preysyng,
We purchace, thurgh oure flateryng,
Of riche men of gret pouste,
Lettres, to witnesse oure bounte,
So that man weneth that may us see,
That alle vertu in us be.
And alwey pore we us feyne;
But how so that we begge or pleyne,
We ben the folk, without lesyng,
That alle thing have without havyng;[2]
Thus be we dredde of the puple, iwis.
And gladly my purpos is this:—

---

[1] Speght reads *parteners;* but *perseners* is the old form of the same word, derived from the French. Thus, in the original it is:—

'Tuit du fait *parçoniers* nous sommes.'

This form survives in the legal term *co-parcenery*. *Persener* also means a parson, or parish-priest, as in *The Testament of Love*:—'Now is steward for his achates, now is courtier for his debates, now is eschetour for his wronges, now is losel for his songes, persener [parson] and provendre [prebendary] alone, with which many thrifete shulde encrese.'

[2] *False-Semblant* appears to forget that he is applying to the friars what St. Paul said of himself and the other Apostles.—2 Cor. vi. 10.

I dele with no wight, but he
Have gold and tresour gret plente;
Her acqueyntaunce wel love I;
This is moche my desire shortly.
I entremete me of brokages,
I make pees and mariages,[1]
I am gladly executour,
And many tymes a procuratour;
I am somtyme messager,
That fallith not to my myster.
And many tymes I make enquestes;[2]
For me that office not honest is;
To dele with other mennes thing,
That is to me a gret lykyng.
And if that ye have ought to do
In place that I repeire to,
I shal it speden thurgh my witt,
As soone as ye have told me it.
So that ye serve me to pay,
My servyse shal be youre alway.
But who so wole chastise me,
Anoon my love lost hath he;
For I love no man in no gise,
That wole me repreve or chastise;
But I wolde al folk undirtake,
And of no wight no teching take;
For I that other folk chastie,
Wole not be taught fro my folie.
'I love noon hermitage more;
Alle desertes and holtes hore
And gret wodes everichon,
I lete hem to the Baptist Johan.[3]
I quethe hym quyte, and hym relese
Of Egipt alle the wildirnesse;

[1] See the General Prologe to *The Canterbury Tales*.—Vol. i. p. 87.
[2] *Enquestes* means probably a legal inquisition of any kind.
[3] The monks considered St. John the Baptist the founder of the ascetic and eremitic life.—Luke i. 80.

To ferre were alle my mansiouns
Fro citees and goode tounes.[1]
My paleis and myn hous make I
There men may renne ynne openly,
And sey that I the world forsake.
But al amydde I bilde and make
My hous, and swimme and pley therynne
Bet than a fish doth with his fynne.
Of Antecristes men am I,
Of whiche that Crist seith openly,
They have abit of hoolynesse,
And lyven in such wikkednesse.[2]
Outward lambren semen we,
Fulle of goodnesse and of pitee,
And inward we, withouten fable,
Ben gredy wolves ravysable.
We enviroune bothe londe and se;
With alle the world werrien we;[3]
We wole ordeyne of al thing:
Of folkis good, and her lyvyng.
'If ther be castel or citee
Wherynne that ony bougerons be,

---

[1] The monks, whose rule was composed with a view to the contemplative life alone, on the model of the ancient hermits and anchorites of Syria, usually built their monasteries in wild solitudes, like Cîteaux, Bolton, or the fens of Lincolnshire and Ely, and occupied themselves in agriculture.—See vol. i. p. 85, note 4. The friars, on the contrary, whose orders were founded to supply the deficiency of learning and active zeal in the parochial clergy, fixed their habitations in the busiest thoroughfares, where they could exercise, with the greatest convenience, their ministry of preaching, and the direction of consciences. Thus, on their first arrival in France, the Dominicans settled themselves in the Rue St. Jacques, in Paris; and in London we have the Minories, Blackfriars, and Whitefriars, in the very heart of the City, all called from the houses which the Mendicants built in these localities.

[2] In the MS. and in Speght, the remainder of the poem is a mass of confusion, owing to the manner in which several passages have been transposed. They are here restored to their proper order, which was easily discovered by a reference to the original French.

[3] Throughout this passage the denunciations pronounced by our Saviour on the Scribes and Pharisees are applied to the friars.—See Matt. xxiii.

Although that they of Milayne were,
For therof ben they blamed there;
Or if a wight out of mesure,
Wolde lene his gold, and take usure,
For that he is so coveitous;
Or if he be to leccherous,
Or these that haunte symonye;
Or provost fulle of trecherie,
Or prelat lyvyng jolily,
Or prest that halt his quene hym by,
Or olde horis hostilers,
Or other bawdes or bordillers,
Or elles blamed of ony vice,
Of whiche men shulden done justice:
Bi alle the seyntes that we pray,
But they defende them with lamprey,
With luce, with elys, with samons,
With tendre gees, and with capons,
With tartes, or with cheffis fat,[1]
With deynte flawnes, brode and flat,
With caleweis, or with pullaylle,
With conynges,[2] or with fyne vitaille,
That we undir oure clothes wide,
Maken thurgh oure golet glide;
Or but he wole do come in haste
Roo venysoun bake in paste,
Whether so that he loure or groyne,
He shal have of a corde a loigne,
With whiche men shal hym bynd and lede,
To brenne hym for his synful deede,
That men shulle here hym crie and rore
A myle wey aboute and more.

---

[1] Speght reads *cheses*, which appears to be right. The original is:—

'Ou de tartes, ou de flaons,
Ou de *fromages* en glaons.'

Conynges means conies, or rabbits. The original is:—

'Connis lardés en paste.'

Or ellis he shal in prisoun dye,
But if he wole our frendship bye,
Or smerten that that he hath do,
More than his gilt amounteth to.
But and he couthe thurgh his sleght
Do maken up a tour of hight,
Nought rought I whethir of stone or tree,
Or erthe, or turves though it be,
Though it were of no vounde stone,
Wrought with squyre and scantilone,
So that the tour were stuffed' welle
With alle richesse temporelle;
And thanne that he wolde updresse
Engynes, bothe more and lesse,
To cast at us, by every side,
To bere his good name wide,
Such sleghtes[1] I shal yow nevene,
Barelles of wyne, by sixe or sevene,
Or gold in sakkis gret plente,
He shulde soone delyvered be.
And if he have noon sich pitaunces,
Late hym study in equipolences,[2]
And late lyes and fallaces,
If that he wolde deserve oure graces,
Or we shal bere hym such witnesse
Of synne, and of his wrecchidnesse,
And done his loos so wide renne,[3]
That al quyk we shulden hym brenne,

---

[1] *Sleights* appears to mean in this place the missiles slung by the engines:—

'Et dreçast sus une perriere,
Qui lançast devant et derriere,
Et des deus cotés ensement,
Encontre nous expressement
Lez *cailloz* cum m' oes nomer.'

[2] 'Estudit en equipolences.' *Equipolences* appears to mean subtle distinctions.

[3] That is, 'And cause his ill-fame [loos, praise, ironically] to spread far and wide.'

Or ellis yeve hym suche penaunce,
That is wel wors than the pitaunce.
'For thou shalt never for no thing
Kan knowen aright by her clothing
The traitours fulle of trecherie,
But thou her werkis can aspie.
And ne hadde the good kepyng be
Whilom of the universite,
That kepith the key of Cristendome,
We had turmented alle and some.[1]
Suche ben the stynkyng prophetis;
Nys none of hem, that good prophete is;
For they thurgh wikked entencioun,
The yeer of the incarnacioun
A thousand and two hundred yeer,
Fyve and fifty, ferther ne nere,[2]
Broughten a book,[3] with sory grace,
To yeven ensample in comune place,
That seide thus, though it were fable:—
'This is the gospel perdurable,
That fro the Holy Goost is sent.'
Wel were it worth to bene brent.
Entitled was in such manere
This book, of which I telle heere.
Ther nas no wight in alle Parys,
Biforne oure lady at parvis,[4]

---

[1] In the MS. this line is omitted, and the following added in a hand of the time of Queen Elizabeth:—

'All that here else just their dome.'

[2] Instead of *ne nere*, the MS. reads *never*.

[3] The book alluded to in the text was published in 1255. It was entitled *Evangelium eternum, sive Spiritus Sancti*, and is said to have been written by John of Parma, general of the friars minor, from notes by Joacim, an abbot, and from the visions of one Cyril, a Carmelite. It was proscribed by Alexander IV., who at that time governed the Western Church, though he was generally favourable to the Mendicants, and had already condemned the book of William of St. Amour, which was directed against them.

[4] The *parvis* was the porch of a church; and it appears that in the porch of Nôtre Dame, at Paris, was held a school, called by Abelard

That they ne might the booke buy,
To copy, if hem talent toke;[1]
There myght he se, by gret tresoun,
Fulle many fals comparisoun:—
'As moche as thurgh his gret myght,
Be it of hete or of lyght,
The sunne sourmounteth the mone,
That troublere is, and chaungith soone,
And the note kernelle the shelle,
(I scorne nat that I yow telle)[2]
Right so withouten ony gile
Sourmounteth this noble evangile,
The word of ony evangelist.'
And to her title they token Christ;

Schola Parisiaca. The scholars became so numerous that they interfered with the divine service, and in 1257 the school was removed to another site, between the Episcopal Palace and the Hôtel-Dieu. The vicinity of a school was obviously an eligible situation for the sale of books; besides, it is probable that the poor scholars who frequented it would eke out their slender resources by transcribing MSS.—See vol. i. p. 91, note 1.

[1] In Speght, a passage of a hundred lines is transposed so as to come in between the second and third line as given below, and the text was probably altered in order that the passage might present some appearance of metrical regularity. When put together it would stand thus:—

'That they ne might the booke buy
The sentence pleased hem well truely.
To the copie if him talent tooke
Of the Evangelistes booke.'

This is quite unintelligible. In the MS., though the passage has been transposed, nothing has been added, as in Speght's text; and when restored to its proper order, as in the text, it makes perfectly good sense, and agrees with the original:—

'A Paris n'ot homme ne fame
Où parvis devant Nostre Dame
Qui lors avoir ne le peust
A transcrire s'il li pleust.'

By merely transposing the two last words of the first line, it is also restored to metrical correctness, thus:—

'That they ne mighte buy the booke
To copy, if hem talent tooke.'

[2] That is, 'What I tell you is not said for the purpose of making a fool of you.'

And many a such comparisoun,
Of which I make no mencioun,
Might men in that book fynde,
Who so coude of hem have mynde.
'The universite, that tho was aslepe,
Gan for to braide, and taken kepe;
And at the noys the heed up-cast,
Ne never sithen slept it fast,
But up it stert, and armes toke
Ayens this fals horrible boke,
Al redy bateil to make,
And to the juge the book to take.
But they that broughten the boke there,
Hent it anoon awey for fere;
They nolde shewe more a dele,
But thenne it kept, and kepen wille,
Til such a tyme that they may see,
That they so strong woxen be,
That no wyght may hem wel withstonde,
For by that book they durst not stonde.
Away[1] they gonne it for to bere,
For they ne durst not answere
By exposicioun ne glose
To that that clerkis wole appose
Ayens that cursednesse, iwys,
That in that book writen is.
Now wote I not, ne I can not see
What maner eende that there shal be
Of al this that they hyde;
But yit algate they shal abide,
Til that they may it bet defende;
This trowe I best wole be her ende.
'Thus Antecrist abiden we,
For we ben alle of his meyne,
And what man that wole not be so,
Right soone he shal his lyf forgo.

[1] The MS. reads *alwey*, a mistake for *awey*, which is Speght's reading.

We wole a puple upon hym areyse,
And thurgh oure gile done hym seise,
And hym on sharpe speris ryve,
Or other weyes brynge hym fro lyve,
But if that he wole folowe, iwys,
That in oure book writen is.
Thus myche wole our book signifie,
That while Petre hath maistrie
May never Johan shewe welle his myght.
'Now have I you declared right,
The menyng of the bark and rynde,
That makith the entencioun blynde.
But now at erst I wole bigynne,
To expowne you the pith withynne:—
* * * *
And the seculers comprehende,[1]
That Cristes lawe wole defende,
And shulde it kepen and mayntenen
Ayens hem that alle sustenen,
And falsly to the puple techen,
That Johan bitokeneth hem to prechen,
That ther nys lawe covenable,
But thilke gospel perdurable,
That fro the Holy Gost was sent
To turne folk that ben myswent.[2]

[1] There is evidently something omitted here, without which the passage is unintelligible. Fortunately, the original enables us to supply the sense:—

'Par Pierre voil le Pape entendre,
Et les seculiers comprendre,
Qui la loi Jhesu Crist tendront,
Et garderont et diffendront
Contre tretous empeschéors;
Et par Jehan les preschéors.'

[2] In this book it appears to have been asserted that there was a distinction between the teaching of St. Peter and that of St. John, as if the former stood most upon the principle of law and order, and the latter upon that of love. St. Peter was thus supposed to represent the Pope and the secular clergy, St. John the friars, whose paramount motive of action was supposed to be charity, and zeal for the salvation of souls. From this it appears that they were by no means obsequious servants of the Sovereign Pontiff.

The strengthe of Johan they undirstonde,
The grace in whiche they seie they stonde,
That doth the synfulle folk converte,
And hem to Jhesu Crist reverte.
'Fulle many another orribilite,
May men in that book se,
That ben comaunded, douteles,
Ayens the lawe of Rome expres;
And alle with Antecrist they holden,
As men may in the book biholden.
And thanne comaunden they to sleen,
Alle tho that with Petre been;
But they shal nevere have that myght.
And God toforne, for strif to fight,
That they ne shal ynough fynde,
That Petres lawe shal have in mynde,
And evere holde, and so mayntene,
That at the last it shal be sene,
That they shal alle come therto,
For ought that they can speke or do.
And thilk lawe shal not stonde,
That they by Johan have undirstonde,
But maugre hem it shal adowne,
And bene brought to confusioun.
But I wole stynt of this matere,
For it is wonder longe to here;
But hadde that ilke book endured,
Of better estate I were ensured,
And freendis have I yit pardee,
That han me sett in gret degre.
'Of all this world is emperour
Gyle my fadir, the trechour,
And emperis my moder is,
Maugre the Holy Gost, iwis.
Oure myghty lynage and owre rowte
Regneth in every regne aboute,
And welle is worthy we mynystres be,
For alle this world governe we,

And can the folk so wel disceyve,
That noon oure gile can perceyve;
And though they done, they dar not say;
The sothe dar no wight bywrey.
But he in Cristis wrath hym ledith,
That more than Crist my britheren dredith.
He nys no fulle good champioun,
That dredith such similacioun;
Nor that for peyne wole refusen,
Us to correcte and accusen.
He wole not entremete by right,
Ne have God in his iye sight,
And therfore God shal hym punyshe;
But me ne rekke of no vice,
Sithen men us loven comunably,
And holden us for so worthy,
That we may folk repreve echoon,
And we nyl have repref of noon.
Whom shulden folk worshipen so,
But us that stynten never mo
To patren[1] while that folk may us see,
Though it not so bihynde be?
And where is more wode folye,
Than to enhaunce chyvalrie,
And love noble men and gay,
That joly clothis weren alway?
If they be sich folk as they semen,
So clene, as men her clothis demen,
And that her wordis folowe her dede,
It is gret pite, out of drede,
For they wole be noon ypocritis.
Of hym me thynketh gret spite is;
I can not love hym on no side.
But beggers[2] with these hodes wide,

[1] To patter, used contemptuously for to pray, is derived from *Pater*, the initial word of the Lord's Prayer in Latin.

[2] In the original, *Beguins*. The *Beguins*, called also *Beguards*, were a kind of married monks, condemned at the Council of Cologne in 1260,

With sleight and pale faces lene,
And grey clothis not fulle clene,
But fretted fulle of tatarwagges,
And high shoos knopped with dagges,
That frouncen lyke a quaile pipe,
Or bootis revellyng as a gype;[1]
To such folk as I you dyvyse,
Shulde princes and these lordis wise,
Take alle her londis and her thingis,
Bothe werre and pees, in governyngis;
To such folk shulde a prince hym yive,
That wolde his lyf in honour lyve.
And if they be not as they seme,
That serven thus the world to queme,
There wolde I dwelle to disceyve
The folk, for they shal not perceyve.
'But I ne speke in no such wise,
That men shulde humble abit dispise,
So that no pride ther undir be.
No man shulde hate, as thynkith me,
The pore man in sich clothyng.
But God ne preisith hym no thing,
That seith he hath the world forsake,
And hath to worldly glorie hym take,
And wole of siche delices use.
Who may that begger wel excuse?
That papelard, that hym yeldith so,
And wole to worldly ese go,

---

and at the General Council of Vienne in 1311. The name was afterwards applied generally to all persons who, while pretending to renounce the world, continued to practise self-indulgence.

[1] This is a description of the habit of the Franciscans, or friars minor. They wore shoes, which are here described as all clouted, and creaking like a quail-pipe from the coarseness of the leather of which they were made; or else boots fitting so badly as to be wrinkled like a loose frock or *gype*. Chaucer turns the monks into ridicule for wearing tight boots (see vol. i. p. 86, note 4), and the friars for wearing loose ones; and it does not appear that the Carmelites, who were discalced, and wore neither, met with much better treatment at his hands.

And seith that he the world hath lefte,
And gredily it grypeth efte,
He is the hounde, shame is to seyn,
That to his castyng goth ageyn.[1]
'But unto you dar I not lye.
But myght I felen or aspie,
That ye perceyved it no thyng,
Ye shulde have a stark lesyng,
Right in youre honde thus to bigynne;
I nolde it lette for no synne.'
The god lough at the wondir tho,
And every wight gan laugh also,
And seide:—'Lo heere a man aright,
For to be trusty to every wight!'
'Fals Semblant,' quod Love, 'sey to me,
Sith I thus have avaunced thee,
That in my court is thi dwellyng,
And of ribawdes shalt be my kyng,[2]
Wolt thou wel holden my forwordis?'
F. Sem. 'Yhe, sir, from hens forewardis;
Hadde never youre fadir heere biforne,
Servaunt so trewe, sith he was borne.
Amour. 'That is ayens alle nature.'
F. Sem. 'Sir, putte you in that aventure;
For though ye borowes take of me,
The sikerer shal ye never be
For ostages, ne sikirnesse,
Or chartres, for to bere witnesse.
I take youre silf to recorde heere,
That men ne may in no manere
Teren the wolf out of his hide,
Til he be slayne, bak and side,
Though men hym bete and al to-defile;
What? wene ye that I wole bigile?
For I am clothed mekely,
Ther undir is all my trechery;

---

[1] 2 Peter ii. 22. [2] See *ante*, p 205, note 1.

Myn herte chaungith never the mo
For noon abit, in which I go.
Though I have chere of symplenesse,
I am not weary of shrewidnesse.
Myn lemman, Streyned-Abstinence,
Hath myster of my purveaunce;
She hadde ful longe ago be deede,
Nere my councel and my rede;[1]
Lete hir allone, and you and me.'
And Love answerde, 'I trust thee
Without borowe, for I wole noon.'
And Fals-Semblant, the theef, anoon,
Ryght in that ilke same place,
That hadde of tresoun al his face
Ryght blak withynne, and white withoute,
Thankith hym, gan on his knees loute.
Thanne was ther nought, but 'Every man
Now to assaut, that sailen can,'
Quod Love, 'and that fulle hardyly.'
Thanne armed they hem communly
Of sich armour as to hem felle.
Whanne they were armed fers and felle,
They wente hem forth alle in a route,
And set the castel al aboute;
They wille nought away for no drede,
Tille it so be that they ben dede,
Or tille they have the castel take.
And foure batels[2] they gan make,
And parted hem in foure anoon,
And toke her way, and forth they gone,
The foure gates for to assaile,
Of whiche the kepers wole not faile;
For they ben neithir sike ne dede,
But hardy folk, and stronge in dede.
Now wole I seyn the countynaunce
Of Fals-Semblant, and Abstynaunce,

[1] 'Were it not for my counsel and advice.'
[2] That is, 'Four separate attacks.'

That ben to Wikkid-Tonge went.
But first they heelde her parlement,
Whether it to done were,
To maken hem be knowen there,
Or elles walken forth disgised.
But at the last they devysed,
That they wolde gone in tapinage,
As it were in a pilgrimage,
Lyke good and hooly folk unfeyned.
And dame Abstinence-Streyned
Toke of a robe of kamelyne,
And gan hir gracche as a bygynne.[1]
A large coverechief of threde,
She wrapped alle aboute hir hede,
But she forgate not hir sawter.[2]
A peire of bedis[3] eke she bere
Upon a lace, alle of white threde,
On which that she hir bedes bede;
But she ne bought hem never a dele,
For they were geven her, I wote wele,
God wote, of a fulle hooly frere,
That seide he was hir fadir dere,
To whom she hadde ofter went,
Than ony frere of his covent.
And he visited hir also,
And many a sermoun seide hir to;
He nolde lette for man on lyve,
That he ne wolde hir ofte shryve.[4]

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 232, note 1.

[2] The psalter, which has always formed the basis of the worship of the Church.

[3] This chain of beads is called in the original a *patenoster*, because the number of pater nosters which the religious were bound to repeat were counted by them:—

'Unes patenostres i a
A ung blanc laz de fil penduës.'

—See vol. i. p. 85, note 2.

[4] Here two leaves of the MS. are lost. The text is taken from Speght, the orthography being harmonized in some degree with that of the MS.

And with so gret devotion
They made her confession,
That they had ofte, for the nones,
Two hedes in one hood at ones.
Of faire shape I devise her thee,
But pale of face sometime was shee;
That false tratouresse untrewe,
Was like that sallow horse or hewe,
That in the Apocalips is shewed,
That signifieth tho folke beshrewed,
That ben al ful of trecherie,
And pale, thurgh hypocrisie;[1]
For on that horse no colour is,
But onely dede and pale, ywis.
Of such a colour enlangoured,
Was Abstinence, ywis, coloured;
Of her estat she her repented,
As her visage represented.
She had a burdoune al of theft,
That Gile had yeve her of his yeft;
And a scrippe of faint distresse,
That full was of elengenesse,
And forth she walked soberlie:
And False-Semblant seynt,[2] je vous die,
And as it were for such mistere,
Doen on the cope of a frere,
With chere simple, and ful pitous,
His looking was not disdeinous,
Ne proud, but meeke and ful peesible.
About his necke he bar a Bible,
And squierly forth gan he gon;
And for to reste his limmes upon,

---

[1] John of Meun and Chaucer disliked the parochial clergy and monks for being fat and rosy, and the friars for being pale and thin. There is an example of the same inconsistency in Matt. xi. 16, *et seq.*

[2] *Seynt* here means girded. 'False-Semblant, girt, I assure you, like a cordelier, and, as was fitting for such a necessity, clad in a friar's cope.'

He had of Treson a potent;
As he were feeble, his way he went.
But in his sleve he gan to thringe
A rasour sharpe, and wel bitinge,
That was forged in a forge,
Which that men clepen Coupe-Gorge.
So long forth hir way they nomen,
Till they to Wicked-Tongue comen,
That at his gate was sitting,
And saw folke in the way passing.
The pilgrimes saugh he fast by.
That beren hem ful meekely,
And humblely they with hem mette.
Dame Abstinence first him grette,
And sith him False-Samblant salued,
And he hem; but he not remued,
For he ne drede him not adele.
For when he saugh hir faces wele,
Alway in herte him thought so,
He shulde know hem bothe two;
For well he knew dame Abstinaunce,
But he ne knew not Constrainaunce.
He knew nat that she was constreyned,
Nee of her theeves life feyned,
But wende she come of wille al fre;
But she come in another degre;
And if of gode wille she began,
That wille was failed her than.[1]
And False-Semblant had he seene alse,
But he knew nat he was false.
Yet false was he, but his falsenesse
Ne coud he not espie, nor gesse;
For Semblant was so slie wrought,
That falsenesse he ne espyed nought.

[1] The meaning is, that, even though the friars in the beginning willingly adopted the rules of abstinence enjoined by their founder, these rules had now become irksome to them.

But haddest thou knowen him beforne,
Thow woldest on a booke have sworne,
Whan thou him saugh in thilke arraie
That he, that whilome was so gaie,
And of the daunce Jolly Robin,[1]
Was tho become a Jacobin.[2]
But sothely, what so men him calle,
Frere prechours[3] ben good men alle;
Hir order wickedly they beren
Such Ministreles if they weren.
So been Augustins,[4] and Cordileres,[5]
And Carmes,[6] and eke sacked[7] freres,
And all freres shode and bare,
(Though some of hem ben gret and square)
Full holy men, as I hem deem;[8]
Everich of hem wolde good man seem.
But shaltow never of apparence
Seene conclude good consequence
In none argument, ywis,
If existence all failed is.[9]

---

[1] Jolly Robin and Maid Marian were the principal characters in an interlude popular in the middle ages.—See vol. vi. p. 28, note 1.

[2] A Dominican.

[3] Another name for the Dominicans.

[4] Austin, or black friars.

[5] Franciscans, Friars Minor, or Cordeliers, so called because girt with a cord.

[6] Carmelites, or discalced friars.

[7] In the original *barré*, the name by which the Carmelites were known on their first appearance in France in 1259. They were so called from the strangeness of their habit, composed of black, yellow, and white. From them the *Rue des Barres*, in Paris, has its name. They afterwards quitted this dress, and adopted a simpler one, consisting of a white cloak over a black habit. It is doubtful, however, whether this is the order meant by the *sacked freres*. Matthew Paris relates that in the year 1257, 'Novus ordo apparuit Londinis de quibusdam fratribus ignotis et non prævisis, qui quia *saccis* incedebant induti, *fratres saccati* vocabantur.'—*Ad. An.* 1257.

[8] This is, of course, ironical.

[9] That is, 'You will never see good arise from retaining outward forms after the substance which they represent has ceased to exist.' The original is:—

'Mès jà ne verrés d'apparence
Conclure bonne consequence
En nul argument que l'en face,
Si default existence efface.'

For men may finde alway sopheme
The consequence to enveneme,
Who so that hath had the subtiltee
The double sentence for to see.
Whan the pilgrimes commen were
To Wicked-Tongue that dwelleth there,
(Hir harneis nigh hem was algate)
By Wicked-Tongue adoun they sate,
That bad hem nerre him for to come,
And of tidinges telle him some,
And sayd hem:—'What cas maketh yow
To come into this place now?'
'Sir,' seyed Strained-Abstinance,
'We, for to drie our penance,
With hertes pitous and devout,
Are commen, as pilgrimes gone about;
Wel nigh on foote alwey we go;[1]
Ful doughty[2] ben our heeles two;
And thus both we ben sent
Thurghout the world that is miswent,
To yeve ensample, and preche also.
To fishen[3] sinful men we go,
For other fishing ne fish we.
And, sir, for that charite,
As we be wont, herborow we crave,
Your life to amende; Christ it save!
And so it shulde you not displese,
We wolden, if it were your ese,

---

[1] Hence the Spanish proverb, 'To ride on St. Francis's mule,' meaning to go on foot.

[2] In the original:—

'Moult avons poudreus les talons.'

We ought, therefore, perhaps, to read:—

'Ful *dusty* ben our heeles two.'

Thus, the court held for deciding disputes at fairs, to which travellers of the lower orders resorted, was called the Court of *Piepoudre*.

[3] The allusion is to the words used by our Lord when he called SS. Peter and Andrew away from their nets and fishing-boats.—Matt. iv. 19.

A short sermon unto you seyne.
And Wicked-Tongue answerde ageyne,
'The house,' quod he, 'such as ye see,
Shall not be werned you for me,
Seye what you list, and I wol here.'
'Graunt mercye swete sir dere!'
Quod alderfist, dame Abstinence,
And thus began she her sentence.
Const. Abstinence. 'Sir, the first vertue cer-
The gretest, and most sovereigne [teyne,
That may be fonde in any man,
For having, or for wit he can,
That is his tongue to refreyne;
Therto ought everie wight him peyne.
For it is better stille be,
Than for to speken harme, parde!
And he that herkeneth it gladly,
He is no gode man sikerly.
And, sir, aboven al other sin,
In that art thou most guilty in.
Thou spak a jape not long ago,
(And, sir, that was right evil do)
Of a young man that here repaired,
And never yet this place apaired.
Thou seydest he awaited nothing,
But to deceive Faire-Welcoming.
Ye seyde nothing soothe of that;
But, sir, ye lye; I tell ye plat;
He ne cometh no more, ne goeth, parde!
I trow ye shall him never see.
Faire-Welcoming in prison is,
That ofte hath pleyed with you er this
The fairest games that he coude,
Withoute filthe, still or loude;
Now dar he not hymselfe solace.
Ye han also the man do chase,[1]

[1] That is, 'You have caused the man to be chased.'

That he dar neither come ne go.
What mooveth you to hate him so,
But properly your wikked thought,
That many a false lesing hath thought?
That mooveth your foule eloquence,
That jangleth ever in audience,
And on the folke ariseth blame,
And doth hem dishonour and shame,
For thing that may have no preving,
But likelinesse, and contriving.
For I dar seyne, that Reson deemeth,
It is not al soothe thing that seemeth,
And it is sinne to controve
Thing that is to reprove;
This wote ye wele. And, sir, therefore
Ye arn to blame the more.
And, nathelesse, he recketh lite;
He yeveth not now thereof a mite;
For if he thought harme, parfay,
He wolde come and gone al day;
He coud himselfe not absteine.
Now cometh he not, and that is sene,
For he ne taketh of it no cure,
But if it be thurgh aventure,
And lasse than other folke algate.
And thou here watchest at the gate,
With spere in thine arest alweye;
There muse, musard, al the deye;
Thou wakest night and day for thought;
Ywis thy travaile is for nought.
And Jelousie, withouten faile,
Shall never quit thee thy travaile.
And skathe is that Faire-Welcoming,
Withoute any trespassing,
Shul wrongfully in prison be,
There weepeth and languisheth he.
And though thou never yet, ywis,
Agiltest man no more but this,

(Take not a-greefe) it were worthy[1]
To put thee out of this baily,
And afterward in prison lie,
And fettred ther til that thou die;
For thou shalt fro this sinne dwelle
Right in the divels arse of helle,[2]
But if that thou repente thee.'
'Ma fay, thou liest falsly!' quod he.
'What? welcome, with myschaunce nowe![3]
Have I therfore herberd yowe
To seye me shame, and eke reprove?
With sory happe to youre bihove,
Am I to day youre herbegere!
Go, herber yow elleswhere than heere,
That han a lyer called me.
Two tregetours art thou and he,
That in myn hous do me this shame,
And for my sothe-saugh ye me blame.
Is this the sermoun that ye make?
To alle the develles I me take,
Or elles, God, thou me confounde,
But er men diden this castel founde,
It passith not ten daies of twelve,
But it was tolde right to my selve,
And as they seide, right so tolde I,
He kyst the rose pryvyly.
Thus seide I now, and have seid yore;
I not where he dide ony more.
Why shulde men sey me such a thyng,
If it hadde bene gabbyng?
Ryght so seide I, and wole seye yit;
I trowe I lied not of it,

[1] That is, 'Take it not amiss that I tell you that it would be a good deed to put you out of the town.'

[2] Here the MS. resumes. Chaucer is responsible for this coarseness, for the original is:—

'Vous en irez où puis d'enfer.'

[3] An exclamation signifying that he wished them the very opposite of welcome.

And with my bemes I wole blowe
To alle neighboris a-rowe,
How he hath bothe comen and gone.'
Tho spak Fals-Semblant right anone,
'Alle is not gospel, oute of doute,
That men seyn in the towne aboute;
Ley no deef ere to my spekyng,
I swere yow, sir, it is gabbyng.
I trowe ye wote wel certeynly,
That no man loveth hym tenderly,
That seith hym harme, if he wote it,
Alle be he never so pore of wit.
And soth is also sikerly,
(This knowe ye, sir, as wel as I)
That lovers gladly wole visiten
The places there her loves habiten.
This man yow loveth and eke honoureth;
This man to serve you laboureth;
And clepith you his freend so deere,
And this man makith you good chere,
And every where that you meteth,
He yow saloweth, and he you greteth.
He preseth not so ofte, that ye
Ought of his come[1] encombred be;
Ther presen other folk on yow,
Fulle ofter than he doth now.
And if his herte hym streyned so
Unto the rose for to go,
Ye shulde hym sene so ofte nede,[2]
That ye shulde take hym with the dede;
He cowde his comyng not forbere,
Though ye hym thrilled with a spere;
It nere not thanne as it is now.
But trustith wel, I swere it yow,
That it is clene out of his thought.
Sir, certis, he ne thenkith it nought;

1 *Come* here means coming, or advent.
2 'You must necessarily see him so often.'

No more ne doth Faire-Welcomyng,
That sore abieth al this thing.
And if they were of oon assent,
Fulle soone the rose hent,
The maugre youres, wolde be.[1]
And sir, of o thing herkeneth me:—
Sith ye this man, that loveth yow,
Han seid such harme and shame, now
Witeth wel, if he gessed it,
Ye may wel demen in youre wit,
He nolde no thyng love you so,
Ne callen you his freende also,
But nyght and day he wole wake,
The castelle to distroie and take,
If it were soth, as ye devise;
Or some man in some maner wise
Might it werne hym everydele,
Or by hym silf perceyven wele.
For sith he myght not come and gone
As he was whilom wont to done,
He myght it sone wite and see;
But now alle other wise wote hee.
Thanne have ye, sir, al outerly
Deserved helle, and jolyly
The deth of helle douteles,
That thrallen folk so giltles.'
Fals-Semblant proveth so this thing,
That he can noon answeryng,
And seth alwey such apparaunce,
That nygh he fel in repentaunce,
And seide hym:—'Sir, it may wel be.
Semblant, a good man semen ye;
And, Abstinence, fulle wise ye seme;
Of o talent you bothe I deme.
What coũnceil wole ye to me yeven?' [shryven,
F. Sem. 'Ryght heere anoon thou shalt be

1. 'In spite of you.' *Youres* agrees with *gre* in maugre.

And sey thy synne withoute more;
Of this shalt thou repent sore;
For I am prest, and have pouste,
To shryve folk of most dignyte
That ben as wide as world may dure.
Of alle this world I have the cure,[1]
And that hadde never yit persoun,
Ne vicarie of no maner toun.
And, God wote, I have of thee,
A thousand tyme more pitee,
Than hath thi preest parochial,
Though he thy freend be special.
I have avauntage, in o wise,
That youre prelates ben not so wise,
Ne half so lettred as am I.[2]
I am licenced boldely,
In divinite for to rede,[3]
And to confessen, out of drede.
If ye woll you now confesse,
And leve your sinnes more and lesse,
Without abode, kneele doune anon,
And you shal have absolution.'

---

[1] The jurisdiction of the Mendicants was not confined to the bounds of one particular diocese or parish.—See *ante*, p. 215, note 1.

[2] See *Sompnour's Tale*.—Vol. ii. p. 114.

[3] In the MS. this sentence is transposed so as to spoil the rhyme, thus:—

'To reden in divinite.'

To read in divinity was the term for giving lectures in that science, a privilege confined to doctors. Here the MS. ends with the imperfect line—

'And longe have red.'

The five last lines are taken from Speght. The scene ends by Male-Bouche's kneeling down to make his confession, when Strained-Abstinence seizes him by the throat, thus obliging him to put out his tongue, which is immediately cut off by False-Semblant with the razor forged on the anvil of Coupe-Gorge, which he carries under his cloak.

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